

**THE RE-WORKED FAIRY TALE
AN APPROACH TO TEACHING HOW
FICTION WORKS**

by

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Abstract

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By reading re-worked fairy tales - in picture books and woven into an apparent realist novel - to Year Five children and engaging them in conversations over an eight week period, I helped them to position themselves differently, and in so doing to see themselves differently, in that they began to become both critically and creatively aware of how structure and literary patterns contribute to meaning. I taped the children's talk and used their journal entries to evaluate the critical and creative nature of their responses in order to reflect on different ways in which I could intervene to help them become more aware. Whilst at times recording their talk was intrusive, it became evident that it was an effective way of analysing their responses.

In the study, the re-worked fairy tales were used as a means of teaching how fiction works from a cultural perspective. The tales and the novel cited in the study are indicative of the change in narrative over the last thirty years and the gradual evolution in the ways stories are told, and the changing views of readers. The metafictional nature of these books emphasises its refusal to take for granted how stories are told. In using metafictional elements the writers/illustrators or "contemporary adaptors" offer many cognitive and emotional opportunities for children to become aware and acute readers.

During the programme, the children were read a range of re-worked fairy tales by writers/illustrators which included Jon Scieszka, Lane Smith, Steve Johnson, Roald Dahl and Tony Ross. As a result they began to understand the jokes in the mostly humorous tales where opposition occurs between normal expectations and some incongruous elements. As Kieran Egan points out, "A joke is not only funny; it is potentially another of those little factories of understanding, a place where understanding can be made and expanded." (1986, p.86)

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INTRODUCTION

Professional background

This study seeks to explore ways in which teachers can explicitly study texts with children in shared ways which allow them to see the many options open to readers and writers. The explicitness is sought in order to help children be more aware of implicit patterns of structures and values and to enjoy their critical activities. For some time¹ there has been a growing realisation that, as teachers, we need to intervene and focus on ways to enhance the relationships between the reader and the text in order to increase readers' understanding and appreciation.

Much of what is written today for children, due to changing narrative structures, requires a different relationship between text and reader. It is one that changes the role of the reader from 'passive' (or 'automatic') to 'active' (or 'conscious')². Collaborative relationships between reader and text do not come easily to all readers with all texts. Serious readers in our classes have often learnt through previous reading encounters what is required of them by developing unconsciously the necessary strategies. For other less experienced readers it becomes important that they be given sensitive intervention by an experienced adult to learn the collaborative strategies in order to have access to the possibilities of meaning any particular book might convey.

These strategies, according to Chambers (1985) and Nodelman (1992), belong to a critical activity which include finding patterns of language, of narrative codes and conventions to make meaning. Discussing literature at a critical level in the primary classroom, for both teachers and students, tends to be overlooked or handled in very limited ways. Some teachers have been put off by their own unhappy secondary school or tertiary experiences and

¹The national statement and profile in English is indicative of an increasing belief that teaching must be made more explicit. Australia Education Council, English - a curriculum profile for Australian schools. Carlton: Curriculum Corporation, 1994.

²Active readers demonstrate an awareness of themselves as readers conscious of the reflective enactment which they practise in the act of reading opposed to passive or automatic ones who do not distance themselves from the text. The active reader is able to reconstitute the text into a meaningful whole and become "a producer and not merely a consumer of text" Barthes, R., S/Z (R. Miller, Trans.) New York: Hill and Wang, 1975.

therefore may view critical reflection as a way to kill enjoyment of a book. Chambers describes a common view of criticism," ... it seems to deal in abstractions, unfeeling intellectualism, cold blooded dissection."(Chambers, 1985, p.144) Yet, as he reminds us, even young children seem to have an innate critical faculty which becomes very evident when one listens to them questioning, reporting, comparing or judging narratives of all kinds including television programmes or commentaries on sport. Many children are quite capable of participating in conversations while reflecting critically and creatively to help them make meaning from shared texts.

From my observation working with other teachers in schools over the past decade, it seems to have become an accepted practice for many primary teachers to regard children's responses to literature as personal. This emphasis upon personal response while valuable did not challenge readers into a more extended awareness and understanding. Margaret Meek (1988), from her work with children, suggests that more thought should be given to the way teachers elicit responses from children and how texts, like Rosie's Walk (1968), can of themselves teach children to negotiate meaning. Cairney (1990) supports this view by advocating that there should be more intervention by the teacher but takes the premise further. He views the literature programme as one which creates situations to encourage a 'three way interaction' between a teacher, other readers and a text, so that children can enjoy books and extend their understanding of how texts work.

Focus of professional practice

This could be done in many ways, I suspect, but my interest was to see how one particular class of Year Five children could learn how to frame, present and reflect on ideas based on the approaches of Chambers (1985), Cairney (1990), Nodelman (1992). These writers advocate whole class and group work with guidance from the teacher, and they stress the importance of dialogue in developing readers' understanding of literature. This was the essence of the study. In adopting the approach using the fairy tale - re-worked in a number of different ways in the picture book and woven into an apparent realist novel - I sought to help the children in my class to

develop a rhetoric³ which would add to their powers of attention, critical reflection and enjoyment.⁴

The intention was to extend and enrich the students by helping them develop a rhetorical discourse which encouraged them to be more critically aware of the narrative choices which artists make in contemporary literature for the young. This discourse was to be learned in the practice of working with artistically interesting and stimulating texts. For instance, a work like The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales (1992) helps make explicit in a somewhat satirical way the range of choices made in writing and presenting a book. This explicitness allows teacher and student, or student and student, to note the kinds of decisions about a number of crucial matters in literary art which include narrative, display, layout and language choice.

From my own experience, I have found it is easy to fall into the trap of engaging children in literature-based activities, such as those suggested by Johnson and Louis (1985, 1987), without any focused discussion with peers and teacher. The conversations added little to the children's understanding of how literature works and, it appeared to me, the activities became time-fillers. For instance, when children are involved in making a story map, the main purpose can become that of completing it attractively without really attending to the work, hence trivialising a worthwhile learning strategy and reducing the actual attention to the work. Critical reflection allows the children to discuss sequence of events at a literal level during and after the mapping activity, giving them the opportunity to revise their ideas about the plot and the significance of events in the story before moving on to exploration of more implicit content and its meanings.

I chose to focus on the fairy tale in its modified, contemporary versions in the picture book and reshaped and used as a symbolic framework in the longer novel Wolf (1990). It was evident from previous interactions with the children that they had some prior knowledge of versions of the

³I have in mind here the ideas to be found in the work of W. C. Booth in his Rhetoric of Fiction. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961.

⁴Although the focus of the study is the importance of the children's conversations, related written responses have been used as evidence of the children's understanding of language patterns and values. It is highly desirable that primary children experience both the immediate and more reflective kinds of written response. However, it was beyond the scope of the study to analyse in depth a broader range of examples which include activities involving writing and expressive activities.

traditional tales and were, therefore, in a better position to learn how writers/illustrators, such as Janet and Allan Ahlberg, Jon Scieszka, Steve Johnson, Lane Smith, Anthony Browne and Gillian Cross used the literary resource of the traditional tales as an appropriate basis for new works. Shared reading of books, such as the Ahlbergs' The Jolly Postman or Other People's Letters (1986) with its humour and pastiche as well as the genre of correspondence⁵, lends itself to a social activity because it is almost impossible for such a book to be read in class without being shared in a variety of ways including reading aloud and group commentary. This sharing permits the students to be more conscious of the choices and sources writers/illustrators have used. With their experience of the traditional tale, the children in my class could show and share their expertise.

One might obtain the view from reading many of the contemporary 're-worked' tales that they are always humorous. Of course, this is not so. I included, therefore, Anthony Browne's Hansel and Gretel (1981) which invites conversation about its style of illustration, the incongruities between text and illustration and visual references. Gillian Cross' novel Wolf (1990) is an example of how the traditional tale can add poignancy to contemporary literature and experience. Common to all of the books cited in this study is the way fresh connections can be made with each re-reading, especially when children are encouraged to play with the choices an artist has provided.

I suggest that children, who have a knowledge of traditional European fairy tales, can learn to read more sensitively and become more aware by examining closely the innovative versions of the tales which draw upon a range of literary and artistic traditions. Moreover, these stories offer opportunities for readers to become skilled in discovering the ways the writers/illustrators achieve their purposes, primarily how they use and challenge literary conventions by using a variety of metafictional devices. Children can see more clearly what is normally taken for granted, and what it is that these unconventional techniques and devices expose or make explicit.

⁵The Ahlbergs cleverly deal with a range of forms in written correspondence including the letter, the postcard and advertising flier.

Structure of the study

In Part One, the opening chapter looks at the re-worked⁶ fairy tale in terms of what it is, how it has evolved, how it offers a different kind of thinking, and why it has not always been taken seriously and included in upper primary literature programmes. Chapter Two examines the potential of these innovative tales in respect to their metafictional features from a literary perspective, and what cognitive opportunities they offer. The focus of Chapter Three is how the tales provide opportunities for emotional development in their use of symbols and metaphor in both text and illustrations, as well as the parallels that can be found in longer narratives. At the end of Part One, Chapter Four ties the earlier chapters together by examining the role of child and teacher, roles which are viewed in the context of current reader response theories which suggest that responding to the books through focused talk provides children with the opportunity to reflect critically and creatively to become more aware and acute readers.

Part Two describes how an eight week literature programme, with its focus on new versions of fairy tales in the picture book and the traditional tale woven symbolically within the realist novel *Wolf* (1990), was implemented. Chapter Five formally outlines the school programme: its context, aims and methodology. The major purpose of the study was the ways in which encounters with such works could be conducted so the children's understanding and appreciation could be extended.

In reality, the school programme was not as well ordered as it appears in this study, as the children often shared the enjoyment of their literary discoveries and returned to the tales, not only in conversations where there was a formal, critical direction, but during more informal times. They found the works and the classroom activity exciting, and this led to many conversations which occurred as the opportunity arose.

As part of the study the classroom conversations were tape-recorded and transcribed. Although the transcripts and analyses of the children's talk are provided in Chapter Six, they cannot convey a complete picture since many of the unexpected, spontaneous moments could not be recorded on tape.

⁶In Chapter One I address this question of 're-worked tale'.

Nevertheless, the taping of the children's talk was the most objective and reflective way to analyse their responses. The transcripts provide evidence of the way in which the children were able to use the language and concepts of literature and in so doing they began to develop their metafictional consciousness.

The final chapter offers some conclusions to be drawn from the programme. It states the main outcomes in respect to the texts, the readers and the teacher, and includes some of the insights I gained from working with the children and implications for my own teaching which I noted. These implications applied to ways of helping them to participate in conversations so that they were encouraged to move from a tentative response to constructing a fuller meaning for the texts.

CHAPTER ONE

THE RE-WORKED FAIRY TALE: IS IT SUITABLE FOR A PRIMARY PROGRAMME?

Do re-worked fairy tales have a place in a primary literature programme? The question is the starting point of my paper, to which the answer from some children, teachers and, perhaps, parents might be, 'they are lots of fun' or 'little kid's stuff'. In this study, I suggest that the range of fairy tales cited are ones from which the children can derive much enjoyment while at the same time providing them with opportunities to become skilled in discovering aesthetic and literary features. It is the complexity of narrative and linguistic structures which justifies their use in an upper primary school programme. For instance, some teachers may respond to the Ahlbergs' very popular The Jolly Postman or Other People's Letters (1986) as a 'novelty item' or a 'spoof' and, in so doing, undervalue its complexity, and thus its potential value for older children can go unnoticed. The book, like others in this category, is sometimes put to one side as one which doesn't fit, a book which seems to defy the rules because of the innovative and experimental way it presents fairy tales.

Such multi-layered books offer varied opportunities for children to focus on the way the stories work through their structure. Furthermore, these stories, which mostly contain humour in the form of puns, satire and parody, often in contemporary settings, seem to imply a reader who enjoys such illustrations and writing, has a knowledge of commonly known fairy tales, and will actively respond to the games they play.

What is a re-worked fairy tale?

There are several ways in which one can address the question of what is meant by the re-worked fairy tale. One might attempt some definitions or list a number of examples of literary work which show re-working in action. Tony Ross's Jack and the Beanstalk (1980), Janet and Allan Ahlbergs' Ten in a Bed (1983), Anthony Browne's The Tunnel (1989), Jon Scieszka's and Lane Smith's The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs! (1989), Fred Marcellino's illustrated version of Charles Perrault's Puss in Boots (1991) and Lincoln

Kirstein and Alain Vaës Puss and Boots (1992) together indicate some of the range of possibilities. Some retell the old tale with minimal modification and some change the tale in terms of setting, point of view or the way in which the story ends or in some mixture of these. Some add other features which address matters such as gender, environment or other contemporary social issues. Some seem to imply a readership which can recognise and enjoy the intertextual references and some do not. The opportunities seem limited only by literary and artistic interests and ingenuity.

Not all re-worked fairy tales are as innovative as The Jolly Postman or Other People's Letters (1986) though they come under the umbrella of literary fairy tales⁷, ones which are based on traditional fairy tales but are usually substantially different from them. The result is, often, a new and distinctive creation which has much appeal to today's reader by providing a fresh look at people, subjects and ideas. Some of the older traditional versions, because of their familiarity, have become distorted and sometimes too sentimental. This has sometimes been evident in the mass produced 'Disney' and 'Golden Book' versions where the stories have been over simplified, thereby losing some of their ability to tell us about the real world we live in through the fairy tale's vivid symbolic form. Criticism, at times, has been levelled at the blandness of such texts and illustrations since they tend to portray the characters and settings in a stereotypical manner, often in an unimaginative cartoon style. The richness of the strongly rhythmical language, which reflects the speech patterns of the early tellers, has sometimes been lost in the simplifications⁸.

Re-workings are not merely retellings, although many elements are borrowed, as each writer recreates and extends a traditional tale in a unique way. Although this study mainly focuses on the re-working of traditional fairy tales, one needs to be aware that original tales are still being written in fairy tale modes. They still retain princes and princesses, witches, dragons, talking animals, magical objects and evil spells.

⁷A literary fairy tale, or art fairy tale as it is sometimes called, is a piece of imaginative writing that often uses the form and motifs of the traditional folk tale but that has an identifiable author. Greene, Ellin "A Peculiar Understanding: Recreating the literary fairy tale." The Horn Book. Boston: The Horn Book Inc., Vol. 61, No. 3, June, 1983.

⁸This is taken from lecture notes related to a presentation by Geoff Fox at the conference, "Literacies: Reading the Culture", Hobart, September, 1992.

For instance, Angela Carter's The Courtship of Mr. Lyon (1979), an update of "Beauty and the Beast" draws on elements of the old tale, where both central characters are transformed by the power of love. Jane Yolen's The River Maid (1982), from the genre of the feminist tale, portrays a frail and helpless heroine, though the river, of which she is the guardian spirit, is strong. "Women may be imprisoned and abused, the story seems to say, but time and the forces of nature will avenge them." (Lurie, 1993, xviii) Both are works of two of the many contemporary writers who show that the fairy tale is a significant and a continually developing part and source of literature for older readers and adults, not just for younger children.

Apart from the earlier writers of literary fairy tales, like Hans Christian Andersen(1805-1875), George Macdonald(1824-1905) and Oscar Wilde(1854-1900), Raymond Briggs was one of the first contemporary writers to rewrite a fairy tale with Jim and the Beanstalk in 1970, and there have been many since. The surrealist parodies of Jon Scieszka, illustrated by Steve Johnson and Lane Smith, being the latest to attract interest. Initially, writers merely rewrote the traditional stories of Perrault and the Grimms from a particular moral or political slant, and even those, like Catherine Sinclair (1800-1864), who composed original tales, did so with the purpose of improving morals in keeping with the Protestant ethic. It is important to note, however, that both Perrault and the Grimms re-worked as well as collected earlier tales. Later in the nineteenth and early into the twentieth century many literary fairy tales, although still seeking to uplift and improve, became less serious using humour and satire, but were then composed primarily for an older audience.

Some of the present re-workings are often termed 'progressive' as they challenge the reader because of the unconventional ways the narratives are presented. Parodies, for instance, offer shifting points of view in the Ahlbergs' The Jolly Postman or Other People's Letters (1986). The surrealist pictures juxtaposed with the traditional tale in Anthony Browne's Hansel and Gretel (1981) add new perspectives and levels of meaning. Another new development is the re-working of fairy tales with a feminist slant and frequently with an ironic tone. In Babette Cole's Princess Smartypants (1986) the rejected prince turns into a toad when kissed by the princess, and in Michael Hearn's The Porcelain Cat (1990) preconceived notions of how fairy tales should end are questioned by the way in which the ironic ending is conveyed in the picture on the back cover. Material rewards are not

granted⁹. Fiona French, in Snow White in New York (1986) which is set in the speak-easies of the prohibition era, uses art deco images to depict the timeless archetypes of wicked stepmother, the handsome prince and the poor little rich girl. In this book, it is the way the images are presented that allow the reader to ask, "Does Snow White live happily ever after?" Such books reward repeated readings to explore the ways the writers/illustrators have experimented with literary, artistic and popular styles and images, and expectations.

Folk/Fairy tale genre

Before I proceed, it is important to differentiate between folk and fairy tales, although the term 'fairy tale' is generally used to cover both. Catherine Storr, for instance, defines folk tales as earthy and primitive, composed for and by 'the common people' who are concerned with a desperate struggle for existence. She cites examples such as "The Three Little Pigs" and "The Gingerbread Boy". On the other hand, Storr, a proponent of Bettelheim's views¹⁰, recognises stories such as "Cinderella" and "The Sleeping Beauty" as true fairy tales which are not just about survival but about one's emergence as a human individual. In effect, Storr wishes to draw attention to the particular features of the fairy tale which make it attractive to both Bettelheim and herself.

But fairy stories are quite different. Folk stories are fables of the effort to remain alive. Fairy stories are fables, myths, if you like, of the struggle to become human, to attain a unique identity, to attain a stature of an individual. A far more complicated business.

(Storr, 1986, p.67,)

The stories of "Hansel and Gretel" and "Little Red Riding Hood", with their emphasis on survival, according to Storr, fall in between. On other hand, Elizabeth Cook believes it would be useful to have a collective name for fairy tale, folk tale, legend and myth. She groups fairy tales, folk tales and fables together and describes them in this way. "[They] are about human

⁹The patterning of traditional tales leads to expectations which may be thought of as preconceived notions for those who have not become critically aware of the patterns which they have come to use. This discussed further in Chapter Three when irony is examined.

¹⁰Bettelheim, in The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1976, finds basic 'truths' in fairy tales because it is belief that the tales accurately represent an anonymous oral tradition that transcends the distortions of individual retellings.

behaviour in the world of magic and often become incorporated into legends" (Cook, p.1, 1969). While noting Storr's stress upon the development of unique identity, like Cook, the generic term 'fairy tale' in this study will refer to folk tale and fable unless otherwise specified. This proved more flexible in the discussion and choices made in class.

Modified, contemporary fairy tales

Since the sixties, the departure from narrative norms in children's books, beginning with Where the Wild Things Are (1963) and Rosie's Walk (1968), has become increasingly apparent. Indicative of these changes are the re-workings of classical fairy tales by writers and narrative artists such as R. Briggs, T. Jones, R. Dahl, A. Browne, T. Ross, F. French, J. Scieszka and J. and A. Ahlberg. Every writer/illustrator is a reinterpreter, and is doing so within a contemporary context. Jane Doonan has said of the return to the illustration of traditional folk and fairy tales that, "The artist is faced with the necessity of creating her own visual once upon a time...she has to work in the spirit of the text, whether she describes, illuminates, extends or decorates it." (Doonan, 1983, p.93,) Doonan's comment, not only applies to the illustrations, but increasingly to the interplay of printed and visual text in the new and experimental forms where the tale is not just extended but turned upside down by the use of literary features which include intertextual references and structural incoherence. Rather than classifying the tales under a new genre, I have found it more useful to view them in light of their varying degrees of explicitness about the aesthetic and literary options.¹¹

Although many re-workings belong to the genre of picture books, a type within a type, there are collections of modern fairy tales, like Jay Williams's The Practical Princess and Other Liberating Fairy Tales (1978), in the form of short stories, that contain many ironic and parodistic elements, so that the text and pictures are independent. Another example is the funny and

¹¹I made the decision not to classify the contemporary, modified versions of fairy tales into a specific genre because the ones cited in this study vary considerably in the ways in which they deal with the traditional tale. However, depending on the purpose, one may find it useful to refer to many of them under a specific genre which may include fractured or experimental tales or parodies. For my purpose I preferred to view them in terms of the range of possibilities offered from an aesthetic and literary perspective, which included how they vary in the way the narrative and linguistic structures are made explicit. This will be elaborated further in the following chapter when the metafictional devices of the modified tales are examined.

sophisticated Ten in a Bed (1983), with its separate chapters, a book which can be read at many levels. It is especially interesting for those, child or adult, who think they are too old for fairy tales.

Conversely, Graham Oakley's Once Upon a Time: A Prince's Fantastic Journey (1989) is definitely a picture book to be used with much older children. The language is far from simple, and the visual jokes and intricate detail in the drawings demand very close scrutiny to appreciate the book's overall ironical and witty tone; it is not for whole class sharing. At the far end of the continuum is a collection of modern fairy tales for adults by contemporary writers, Caught in a Story (1992) of which the editors remind us, "Even in these modern tales nothing is as it seems, any more than in the traditional fairy tale." (Park and Heaton eds., 1992, p. xix,)

The fairy tale: re-worked in picture books

Nonetheless, my focus for Year Five was mainly on a specific group of picture books for two reasons. First, many picture books have close ties to the oral tradition of fairy tales and are still the occasion and source of interaction between adults and children. The re-worked tales, with their sophisticated illustrations, comments and asides, act as a medium or context of interaction between teacher and child and, therefore, can be easily shared, either in small groups or with a whole class. Secondly, they offer both cognitive and emotional opportunities in the way in which they have been written and illustrated. The books chosen make explicit many of the codes and conventions the writers/illustrators have used in their construction, but this does not necessarily mean they are easier to understand. The assumption that the pictorial information is less abstract than the verbal information and, therefore, more appropriate because children think in more concrete terms is, according to Nodelman (1992), not true.

Like words, in fact, pictures do not convey much meaning until we know the language in which they are expressed. Like words, they are "abstract", in the sense that they exist within systems of learned codes, and thus make little sense to anyone without a previous knowledge of those systems...Children also have to understand the systems of codes and signifiers that are specific to pictures.

(Nodelman, 1992, p.13)

At times, the words and pictures describe different aspects of the story and, together, they suggest elements which the reader must decode in order to understand the story fully and enjoy it. For instance, in many of the picture books of re-worked fairy tales, humour plays an important role at two levels - the verbal and the visual. The illustrations tease or provoke the reader to look again to see the joke, or realise the contradiction to the text and, thereby, offer particular opportunities for irony and the noticing of irony¹². The illustrations are not there simply to support the text since they might, on occasions, tell more than is in the text, alter the text and, at the same time, give deeper insights into the story.

The fairy tale reshaped and used symbolically in a realist story

The justification for the inclusion of Wolf (1990) in this study was two fold. First, to help the children to recognise how Cross uses the fairy tale as a structural device and, second, to become aware of the implication of the textual strategy - metaphor. The metaphor 'wolf' reverberates throughout the novel. The wolf's image as dangerous, grandmother-devouring, Red Riding Hood-threatening is to be contrasted with the actual wolf in nature which is threatened with extinction. Children are required to read the images in a new, more metaphorical or symbolic way, where there may be more than one level of meaning. Conscious awareness of the presence and power of symbol is an important aesthetic and literary development.

Whereas Browne uses stark surrealism in his pictures of Hansel and Gretel (1981) to penetrate the implicit symbolic messages of the Grimms' version, Cross, uses the plot and symbolic motifs of "Red Riding Hood" to drive her story forward. The 'inner world' of the protagonist, Cassy is in utter turmoil. By drawing on the fairy tale explicitly and without losing the potency of the original, Cross is able to reduce Cassy's inner conflicts to manageable terms for the young reader of the longer narrative who has a fairy tale background. Through the powerful symbolism drawn from the fairy tale, Cross provokes strong feelings of dread, awe and mystery, while, at the same time, she is able to deepen abstract concepts, such as acceptance, tolerance, responsibility and moral paradox through the weaving of the two stories, fairy tale and realist fiction.

¹²Mallan, Kerry Laugh Lines: exploring humour in children's literature. Sydney: Primary English Teaching Association, 1993.

Furthermore, Cross, by drawing on "Red Riding Hood" in the dream sequences and alluding to related symbols in the realist part of the story, is calling the readers' attention to the functioning of the story, thereby increasing their textual awareness. She interweaves the emotional truth of a wolf story which, if the reader has a story store, includes "Little Red Riding Hood", and this gradually becomes a kind of counterpoint to the realist, contemporary story. It adds new perspectives to a contemporary London childhood. The fairy tale, the natural history of wolves and the story of family life offers contrasts in which readers are invited to map the ordinary and the fabulous onto each other. In so doing they can be helped to note the implied patterns which influences understanding.

Few children or adults have ever seen a wolf in real life, or indeed are likely to, and, therefore, have to rely on what they read or see on television. Many children tend to have gleaned their image of the wolf, an all-threatening and arch-villainous character from stories through folklore, one which is very evident in the rich vein of Little Red Riding Hood stories. In Wolf (1990) Cross contrasts actual wolves with the wolf of our culture's imagination and, thereby, challenges our inherited image and judgements. The wolf is Cassy's father, the natural wolf and the fairy tale wolf all at once, and these contrasts add narrative tensions and layers of meaning. The different wolves allow readers of any age to confront moral and personal paradoxes.

It has been my experience that children are remarkably competent at handling different kinds of technical devices of story telling, provided that the story is from their culture. Therefore, I felt comfortable with the inclusion of Wolf (1990), regardless of its complexity, because my class were familiar with the fairy tale. Furthermore, I wanted to demonstrate, by sharing Wolf (1990) with the children, that fairy tales are only superficially simple, that they can be multi-layered in both their structure and meaning. If the children were to experience the re-worked tales in mostly humorous picture books during the unit, some of them may have regarded fairy tales as unimportant. I wanted to raise their awareness, that like myth and legend, folk and fairy tale are frequently the source of many stories.

Moreover, I wished the children to be aware of the many forms a re-working could take, from Ross's satirical caricatures to French's stylised parody, to Browne's surrealism and, finally, to the reflexive novel, Wolf

(1990), where the fairy tale, with its metaphorical symbolism, gives shape and imaginative power to the framework of the entire story. As I discuss in the following two chapters, intertextual references and allusions, which contribute to the complexity in Wolf (1990), are metafictional features found to varying degrees in more complex literature.

Objections to re-worked fairy tales

Given the experimental and exaggerated nature of many of the re-worked tales in picture book format, there could be a tendency for them to be viewed as inappropriate or not 'proper' books for class sharing in the middle and upper primary years by some teachers and parents. Implicit in this view appears to be the notion that fairy tales are either escapist fantasy or that children should have outgrown them and be reading books suited to their particular level. As Alison Lurie points out in the introduction to The Oxford Book of Modern Fairy Tales (1993), a collection for older readers and adults, "Today the fairy tale is often dismissed as old fashioned, sentimental, and silly; a minor form of literature, appropriate only for children. To people who have been recently over-exposed to the bowdlerized and prettified cartoon versions of the classic stories, this view may seem justified." (Lurie, 1993 p. xviii) The ones cited in this paper are sophisticated. Many of them cannot be suggested for any particular age bracket and can be read on many levels. They are, indeed, different from the mass produced 'Disney' and 'Golden Book' versions with which many children and adults seem to be familiar.

Humour

Another reason, perhaps, that re-worked fairy tales are not taken seriously is that many of them contain humour which is often regarded as light-weight or second-class literature. Yet humour, often in the form of incongruities in the re-worked tales, provides a way of thinking creatively for the less experienced reader. Moira Robinson puts it this way, "Children who are deprived of humour in their literary diet or are not given the opportunity to become familiar with all the forms of comedy are being deprived both of the means of coping with existence and a different stimulating way of thinking." (Robinson in Saxby and Winch eds., 1987, p.287) Nonetheless,

there are adults who regard, with distaste, aspects of the modern idiom and humour contained in particular liberated tales.¹³

Values

There are others who object to the radical changes in the classical European fairy tales on which they were brought up, many of which reflect Christian or similar values, where self sacrifice is viewed to be better than looking out for one's own interests. However, there is a puzzling irony in many of them, as material rewards are given to those who set the least store by them. Conversely, Aesop fables, with some exceptions, teach self preservation and watchful cleverness, often in the form of trickery. The Aesopian value, where the weak must use cleverness to survive, is evident in the fairy tale "Puss in Boots" where trickery is rewarded, and both the naive, youngest son and the crafty cat achieve material success. In Tony Ross's up-dated version, a more contemporary, moral way of 'reading' the old tale is offered to the reader. It is made quite explicit that the cat is sneaky and, perhaps, the forerunner of today's confidence man or entrepreneur. Ross demonstrates a fresh reading of this old tale, yet retains a sense of warning to the readership.

Nevertheless, the classical fairy tales of the Grimms generally allow for perfect goodness and living happily ever after, and suggest trust and patience as the better way, after all miracles can happen. Gila Reinstein points out, when comparing the tales of the Grimms with Aesop Fables that, "The folk tales create an overtly idealised world in which evil is confronted, fearful situations are mastered, wickedness is punished, and virtue rewarded... The lowly, if good enough, can, therefore, hope to be raised up. This is not the world we know, but the world we might wish to live in." (Reinstein, 1983, p,52) Thus "Puss in Boots", whilst entertaining, does not fit the current, accepted, western moral stereotype. On the other hand, the trickster archetype in other cultures, such as portrayed in some African tribal tales, is highly regarded, and may still be valued in playground and certain social groups.

¹³For example, in Roald Dahl's "Cinderella" Revolting Rhymes London: Jonathan Cape, 1982 the Prince cries, "Who's this dirty slut?" and in Fiona French's Snow White in New York Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986 the step mother is referred to as "the classiest dame in New York".

Moral objections

On occasions criticism is levelled at the overt moralising in fairy tales and, as a result, the moral tale is seen as a thing of the past. David Gooderham, however, takes a different view on the moral issue in that the focus should not be on how issues are treated in fairy tales or adapted in realist texts, but how moral assertions are made in the structuring of the texts.

Fairy tales have a dual moral structure: that deriving from their archaic past and that constructed by their contemporary adaptors. The former, with its clear position of good and bad and the final triumph of good, is a universal feature: the latter, a more particular matter for each generation. So strong is the traditional moral logic of the fairy tale, however, that it makes its presence felt in every kind of adaptation.

(Gooderham, 1993, p.116)

As Gooderham reminds us in Ross's re-worked Jack and the Beanstalk (1983), although the traditional moral structure is modified, the strength of the moral logic is still present with its moralistic coda, "Really Jack stole nothing...". In an exaggerated way, Dahl and Blake depict Goldilocks in Revolting Rhymes (1982), as not just a naughty girl, but a criminal who deserves to be punished and should not escape. Scieszka and Smith in The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs! (1989) show how exaggeration of the truth can be made more fantastic in order to comprehend it. No matter how persuasive A. Wolf becomes, most readers are not convinced of his innocence. Re-worked fairy tales, either directly or in humorous and ironic modes, do continue in different ways, the tradition of moral retribution and moral lessons.

Religious objections

Apart from moral objections to fairy tales there are religious ones to be found. For example, in some fundamentalist religious doctrines, magic, especially that of witches, is regarded as evil despite any moral message the tale might contain. Still today, witchiness and sorcery contained in fairy tales and other fiction have been banned in some communities, since they are viewed as dangerous influences in their children's lives. Magic, in this perspective, is regarded as irrational or it belongs to the devil and, thereby, violates the particular religious doctrine. Re-worked tales, I suspect, would invite similar criticisms in the way conservative values and authority are mocked. This would be particularly so with those with a feminist perspective which challenge other unexamined values. Many conservative

religious groups tend to be patriarchal in their social and family structures in the ways they differentiate gender roles. Energetic and assertive princesses are not the roles they would wish to present.

Violence in fairy tales

Violence in fairy tales is generally the aspect which draws much attention to their suitability. Whilst the degree to which it is portrayed has reflected societal values since they were first recorded by Perrault and later the Grimms, many variants, where punishments are meted out, conjure up images of torture and sadism under the guise of poetic justice. However, Perrault did sanitise the more earthy and horrifying oral versions for his well-to-do adult audiences. The retellings differ from the originals in that the changes which occur depend on the values and attitudes of those who tell them. "The tendency of tales to be modified as they are retold explains why the tales as most people know them differ from the versions recorded in traditional sources. Nowadays, for instance, we are so fearful of frightening children with the depiction of violence that in many printed versions of the tale, Little Red Riding Hood is not eaten at all; she runs away in the nick of time, or even beats up the wolf and saves herself." (Nodelman, 1992. p. 165)

Mutilation, in Dahl's and Blake's Cinderella in Revolting Rhymes (1982), is very evident when the prince chops off the ugly sister's head. Conversely, in Perrault's version, Cinderella merely forgives her ugly sisters, whilst in the Grimms' version two pigeons fly down and peck out their eyes. As humorous as Dahl's and Blake's version might be, the sadism and black humour often polarise adult opinion, with those who are offended and those who find it amusing.

Violence in fairy tales has been the focus of an on-going debate. Nicholas Tucker, for instance, objects to Bettelheim's conviction about the implicit wisdom of fairy tales and their therapeutic effect on those who read them as being over simplified and generalised - for Bettelheim certain fairy tales can do no wrong regardless of the violence some may contain. Thus, Tucker, in his criticism argues:

Those hearing them now, while still possibly responding to them at a symbolic level, could perhaps sometimes be spared some of the extra savage ways in which those symbols are

presented and the obvious approval of them in the text, surely more in keeping with darker times and crueller attitudes in the past than anything we would hope to put over today.

(Tucker, 1984, p.39)

Tucker is not advocating the bowdlerization of the Grimms' work but rather waiting until the child audience grows a little older and tougher in order to see them as human tales, ones which embody both our strengths and weaknesses. Nonetheless, one wonders how he would view the savagery in Dahl's and Blake's "Snow White" with its cannibalism and the decapitation of the ugly sisters in his "Cinderella" in Revolt Rhymes (1982).

However, Ann Trousdale¹⁴, points out that most children appreciate humorous versions and are quite aware that they are not the 'real' fairy tale. She believes we should not deprive young children of the classical fairy tales or attempt to remove any violence from them. Reading the softer rewritten versions which omit any mention of death and brutality, she argues, do not 'protect' children. Her research indicates that punishment of the villain does not have a pathological effect upon children, rather the lack of resolution of the danger may have such an effect. For example, the children's responses to the version of Walt Disney's "The Three Little Pigs" (1978) in Trousdale's study showed that some young children were disturbed when the wolf was left alive. When read the traditional version in which the first two pigs are eaten by the wolf and the wolf himself is eaten for dinner, the children were not drawn to the gratuitous violence but they did need to have the danger firmly resolved.

Summary

Despite the objections to the brutality in and changes to classical fairy tales, children do need to be familiar with and be able to make references to a wide range of traditional fairy tales and nursery rhymes when reading the re-worked ones in order to find out what is on offer and, in so doing, may acquire a greater knowledge of several versions of the same fairy tale, and thus articulate their own preferences. The writers/illustrators

¹⁴Trousdale, Ann "Who's Afraid of The Big Bad Wolf", Children's Literature in Education. New York: Agathon Press, Vol. 20, No. 2, 1989.

acknowledged in this paper are building upon and reinforcing children's literary knowledge by providing a different literary experience.

Anne Wilson, a proponent of the classical tales, believes the more radical ones should be made available to children but not replace them. "They are a totally different mental experience from the classical tales - being a challenge at conscious, intellectual levels of thinking - and they will offer children the opportunity of becoming radical thinkers." (Wilson, 1984, p.87) For instance, this mental experience presents itself in several versions of the re-worked fairy tale "The Frog Prince". The Frog Prince Continued (1991) is just one example which gives readers the opportunity to look at the characterisation and question the construction of masculine and feminine roles. The story can be discussed in terms of the characters' appearance and behaviour, that is how the prince and princess are depicted in both the text and illustrations. This may extend into a discussion of how the media treat 'real-life' princes and princesses.

Furthermore, it seems that the radical or even irreverent re-workings demonstrate the indestructibility of the fairy tale and their enduring power in the modern world. Their themes and characters surface in dreams, in songs, in films, in advertisements, and in casual speech. For example, recently in the "Top Ten" there was a video clip of "The Three Little Pigs", and despite the conservation message the lyrics contained, it was Rambo brandishing a machine gun, not the woodcutter, who emerged to dispose of the wolf, perhaps, reminding us of the violent world in which we live. The video clip, like the picture book format, lends itself to conversations about its construction, for example, the use of perspective to provide point of view, and thus its effect on the viewer. This, in turn, raises the question, "How does structure carry meaning?" The following chapter demonstrates how the experimental fairy tale, in its unconventional structure, provides cultural continuity frames for thought and self reflection.

CHAPTER TWO

THE COGNITIVE OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED BY THE FAIRY TALE :

RE-WORKED IN THE PICTURE BOOK AND A LONGER NOVEL

The focus on the fairy tale, re-worked in the picture book and used as a metafictional device in a longer novel in this study, is viewed in cognitive terms, that is it offers an interesting challenge at conscious levels of thinking. I suggest that one of the ways children can learn to read more critically is by examining closely the innovative versions of fairy tales. Here the aesthetic and literary choices the artist offers are only limited by readers' understandings of how to deal with such texts. They invite readers to note narrative patterns, to ask questions and negotiate meaning. From their experience with challenging picture books and other fictions, readers learn about the structure of narrative and the infinite meanings that exist on each page both in print and pictures.

A range of perspectives

However, the focus on the modified, contemporary tales is not directed at one particular perspective - archetypal, psychoanalytical, sociological or feminist - to gain the best understanding. Rather it is a cultural one which uses critical reflection to view each story from a range of perspectives based on Jonathan Culler's notion, that each change of perspective brings something different from the text¹⁵. For example, to examine the re-worked fairy tale by type and motif only, while helpful in recognising them in other stories, would become merely a classification exercise and deny the work's complexity in terms of its linguistic and narrative structures, as well as the plurality of meaning.

Storyteller and writer George Shannon believes, "It is not important that children know the academic coding for tales and their genealogy, but it is of value for them to realise that tales do have a history based in people with

¹⁵Culler, Jonathan On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism After Structuralism. New York: Cornell University Press, 1982.

similar concerns and emotions regardless of their culture." (Shannon, 1986, p.117) In light of this it would be more useful for children to consider general story patterns or types which appear to be found later in more elaborated forms in the longer stories and novels they read, and to explore the ways in which they have been treated in the re-workings.

While discussing satire, parody or irony in a tale, conversations about the comical changes, which contain strong social or political messages, may arise. Each new re-working needs to be judged by the teacher on how potentially challenging it is at a conscious level, and in what context it is to be used. For instance, if one were to introduce to children some of Tony Ross's retellings, one could approach the folk tales by focusing on his use of narrative technique. In his exuberant sketches, many of which are embedded with satirical descriptive detail, narrow meanings are expanded. His portraits often expose the 'high and mighty' and show his ability to make scathing visual attacks on the pretentious, the pompous or the unjust.¹⁶

In Mrs. Goat and Her Seven Little Kids (1990), Ross adds a social message about parenting by having Mother give each kid a whack as well as a final kiss on the nose. A perfect parent! Furthermore, the goat offspring are presented as miniatures of their mother and also as quintessential 'kids' in the human sense. For the wolf, Ross devises a portrait reminiscent of the sly politicians in nineteenth century cartoons.¹⁷ If a radical reading were to be pursued of this tale, it might be closer to what Jack Zipes¹⁸ calls a 'liberating' tale where it is used as a radical mirror to reflect what is wrong with our accepted social norms. In sharing this book children are encouraged to think and question.

However, such a perspective would show only one view of the tale and disregard what Nodelman calls a fairy tale's basic quality "...that they are

¹⁶His precursors in the field of social and political commentary include William Hogarth (1697-1764), Thomas Rowlandson (1756-1827) and George Cruikshank (1792-1878).

¹⁷MacCann, Donnarae, and Richard, Olga, "Picture Books for Children" in Wilson Library Bulletin. New York: H.W. Wilson Co., November, 1992.

¹⁸Jack Zipes believes that the old tales told by Perrault, Grimm and others are damaging and that children have been manipulated by authors who have intervened to influence them through the tales, with their purpose being to 'civilise' children according to the mores, values and manners of their time. He argues a case for the subversive storytelling of writers from George MacDonald and Oscar Wilde to the present day in order to liberate children into progressive thinking.

capable of taking on so many different meanings." (Nodelman, 1992, p.170) Liberated fairy tales, such as those collected in Zipes's Don't Bet on the Prince (1986), according to Nodelman, could invite conversation about how they escape repressive, outmoded or dissatisfying values. Similarly, other re-worked tales like those of Ross's, offer opportunities for children to examine stereotypes, analyse characters, interpret illustrations and search for symbols and hidden meaning.¹⁹

Changing narrative structures reflected in the re-workings

One only has to look at the books short listed in annual book awards in Australia to see examples of how narrative structure has been the focus of author interest, from picture books through to teenage fiction. I suggest in this study that by encouraging and making opportunities for children to participate in shared reading experiences of the more complex, multi-layered books, which include some of the re-worked tales, that children may be better able to read more demanding works encountered later in their schooling and adult life. The re-worked fairy tales cited appear on the surface to be simple but are not simply told. The writers/illustrators are providing middle and older readers with the opportunity to generate and explore expectations through the ways the tales are structured.

One example is the 1991 winner of the Children's Book Council of Australia Book of the Year: Older Readers, Strange Objects (1990), by Gary Crew. He uses a very different style of narrative²⁰, something Alan Garner in Red Shift (1973) and Robert Cormier in After the First Death (1979), for examples, were experimenting with in the last twenty years. The change in narrative is part of the gradual evolution in the way stories are told and the changing views of readers, and thus the narrative techniques in children's books parallel what has been happening in adult literature, and to a some extent reflect cinematic influences.

¹⁹Tony Ross's Puss in Boots London: Andersen Press, 1981 is examined in Chapter Six. His graphic style, witty visual metaphors, and the visual play between text and illustration become the focus for conversations with the children.

²⁰Gary Crew in Strange Objects Melbourne: Heinemann, 1991 uses multiple forms, registers and genres. The way in which he has structured this innovative teenage novel challenges the reader to 'interrogate' the text. This interrogation includes questioning the nature and veracity of passages in the work.

For example, in The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales (1992), Scieszka and Smith, like the film maker, choose point of view for the readers/viewers. Their use of point of view - such as shots taken looking down upon a character or taken up from a low level as though the viewers are looking through a window at an event in a story or ones that deliberately make the viewers conscious that they are currently looking in upon what is happening - are variations in focus that affect the way the readers/viewers respond to a scene. In the past many picture books tended to use middle distance scenes rather than long shots or close-ups. Furthermore, Scieszka and Smith, in The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales (1992), develop their plot cinematically so that continual shifts in point of view are presented and characters often speak directly to the readers/viewers. Examples of such techniques are examined later in chapter.

Metafiction

This kind of writing and illustration is often associated with terms like 'postmodernism' and 'metafiction'. It is, sometimes, the latter which best catches the kind of writing, illustration and narrative technique explored in this paper. Codes and conventions of story telling that usually remain implicit - and thereby invisible - become transparent to varying degrees. Metafictional devices have been used since at least the eighteenth century. Laurence Sterne, in his overtly reflexive novel The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy (1759-1767)²¹, requires the reader to participate in completing the story. For instance, Sterne invites readers to draw their imagined portrait of the lady on two blank pages provided, a device which Scieszka and Smith used in The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales (1992). In Australia in more recent adult literature, Elizabeth Jolley, a celebrated writer of reflexive narrative, describes in Central Mischief (1992) how she has been influenced by the nineteenth century writers, Thomas Hardy and George Eliot, whose novels presented multiple plots and shifting points of view, combining impersonal and personal narrative and the person-centred third person.

²¹In The Oxford Companion to English Literature Drabble, Margaret (ed.), Fifth Ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985, it states that Laurence Sterne wrote the nine volumes of Tristram Shandy between 1759 and 1767. Sterne is generally acknowledged as a narrative innovator of the highest originality.

Rather than proffering a definition for 'metafiction' as a genre, it is my intention in this study to view the books cited in respect to their greater or lesser explicitness in metafictional awareness. This view is advocated by Wenche Ommundsen who suggests a combination of two models which are compatible. The first model, which is all embracing, allows for an investigation of how reflexivity functions in all periods and all texts, not just books written in the twentieth century. The second one is a 'the reader-oriented' one. Thus her view of metafiction is "the product of a certain practice of *reading*, a particular kind of attention brought to bear on the fictional text. All texts can be read as metafictions, but in order for this potential to be realised, the reader has to bring to the text a certain kind of interest, a set of expectations, and a specific competence." (Ommundsen, 1993, p.29) Part of my work with the children, while guiding their interpretive activities, is to help them develop the competence Ommundsen suggests. These activities give the children opportunities to consider why artists may have chosen to make certain aesthetic and literary features explicit. This, in turn, may lead the children to explore the features and, then, decide on which lines of interpretation to follow, either individually or as a whole class.

To illustrate the parallels between adult reflexive narratives and a re-worked fairy tale, like The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales (1992), I shall consider three metafictional devices which David Lewis (1990)²² refers to in his discussion of the metafiction in picture books: boundary-breaking, excess and indeterminacy, and, in addition, I will include intertextual reference and parody.

The first metafictional device suggested by Lewis 'boundary-breaking or slippage' is where the flow of the narrative is interrupted to allow the 'author' to address readers directly or, alternately, a character from another level of the narration may appear in many different settings in the same work. Ten in a Bed (1983) and The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales (1992) are good examples of how the flow of narrative can be frequently interrupted, thereby questioning and highlighting the role of the narrator. For example, when Dinah in her own narrative in Ten in a Bed

²²David Lewis in "The Constructedness of Texts: Picture Books and the Metafiction" Signal: Approaches to Children's Books. Stroud, Glos: Thimble Press, No. 62 considers the reasons why we remain largely blind to the distinctive and remarkable features of popular contemporary picture books. He draws a parallel between contemporary picture books and adult 'experimental' fiction.

(1983) asks of the other characters "Whose story is it?" the reader is then given the opportunity to question the role of the narrator to see how the different stories are intertwined, or how the stories operate within stories. On such occasions the readers are called upon to question the authority of the author or storyteller in the story. This is the kind of self conscious questioning 'the story in a story' demands. A book like Ten in a Bed (1983) exposes or subverts the levels of narrative, which in traditional fiction are quite stable and remain, in a sense, unnoticed.

In the way The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales (1992) has been constructed, Scieszka and Smith seem to be asking, "How is a book put together?" Aidan Chambers working with a group of student teachers defined a book as "...a sequence of pages on which appear meaning communicating marks, all of which are bound together in an authorised order." (Chambers, 1993, p.7) The key word is 'authorised' and the authority of the book is that it is authored. Scieszka and Smith alert the readers to this concept by asking just who is the author or storyteller, as it is not always made clear, and they do this very cleverly with Jack (from "Jack and the Beanstalk") who, right at the beginning of the book, asserts his role by explaining to the reader and Little Red Hen simultaneously that he is the narrator. Jack continues in role by interjecting in order to announce what is going to happen next, or, as in "Little Red Running Shorts" after delivering a brief summary, offends both the heroine and the wolf, and they then refuse to tell their story. At this stage the reader begins to wonder just who is telling the story, and with which 'Jack' are they dealing. This confusion is later questioned by Little Red Hen who asks the reader:

How do they expect me to tell the whole story
by myself?
Where is that lazy narrator?
Where is that lazy illustrator?
Where is that lazy author?
(Scieszka and Smith, 1992)

In the longer narrative, Wolf (1990), the break in one of the narratives occurs with the interruption of the dream sequence at the end of each alternate chapter, thereby breaking its stability. Ommundsen describes this feature as 'structural incoherence' since it has the general effect of making the reader stop and reconsider 'reading and sense making practices' which are taken for granted. Incoherence and 'boundary-breaking' are common in

metafiction and they occur whenever "a text may refuse to comply with expectations set up by the genre to which it belongs: ... for example, the idea of a single ending." (Ommundsen, 1993, p. 9)

The second metafictional device 'excess', Lewis describes as 'verbal or narrative gigantism' whereby the readers have too much information to deal with, another kind of incoherence. As he puts it, "...our settled perceptions of a recognisable secondary world are tested. We have difficulty constructing an intelligible story." (Lewis, 1990, p. 132) Furthermore, he reminds us that going too far 'over the top' is common place in the culture of childhood. This feature is certainly exploited in The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales (1992) where images are 'piled up', and some pictures are grotesquely comic beyond the bounds of what one would normally expect. Likewise, in Revolting Rhymes (1982) social norms are put under strain, and unmentionable or embarrassing possibilities are tested.

The third metafictional device 'indeterminacy' is where there is too little information, in that issues or outcomes are not resolved, or relationships remain unclear. Some writers exploit the 'sense of ending' to create an effect of dislocation and disorientation, where the ending remains beyond the reader's reach. Furthermore, what Wolfgang Iser (1978) describes as the 'gaps' or indeterminacies in the text are often exposed explicitly in some books to reveal the comic absurdity of the situation when textual props are missing. There is sometimes a deliberate withholding of information in the text so that the reader is required to build the story from partial information. The withholding plays on the idea of asking the reader to participate actively in reading the story. This technique becomes very evident in a number of stories in The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales (1992). For instance, illustrating the blank page, standing on one's head to read the dedication and following the growing strand of hair from the rabbit in "The Hair and the Rabbit" into the next story. Nonetheless, regardless of the initial confusion "...another reading is to accept and savour the indeterminacy itself." (Lewis, 1990, p. 144)

Finally, the two other devices - intertextuality and parody employed in metafiction - will be described under the following sub-headings in this chapter, along with the other distinctive features which arise from the those already mentioned: boundary-breaking, excess and indeterminacy. It is the

way in which all these devices deviate from, or cut across, the stable conventions of realist fiction that make them a recurrent feature of metafiction.

Intertextuality

A significant feature of the way in which many fairy tales have been re-worked is the use of literary allusion and intertextuality, the very feature that makes a book like The Jolly Postman or Other People's Letters (1986) so popular with both children and adults. The postman on his daily round interacts with characters from well known fairy tales and nursery rhymes, thereby inviting readers to approach the story in terms of what it shares with other stories. Nodelman points out that children make sense of a new story in terms of its similarities to the old one.

The schemata we develop from our previous experience of literature are our most significant contexts for responding to literature, because they provide two sources of understanding and pleasure: the comfort of familiarity, of finding in new experiences elements of ones we're already learned to understand, and the excitement of unfamiliarity, of thinking about the specific details that attract our attention exactly because they don't fit our previously established schemata.

(Nodelman, 1992, p.74)

Hence, the re-worked fairy tale provides many opportunities for children to become aware of the influence of intertextual links. For example, in The Frog Prince Continued (1991), the direct references and allusions to witches from other fairy tales are quite explicit. This is indicative of a story with clear pre-textual relationships which bends and stretches elements of traditional fairy tales through its overt use of a metafictional device to enlist reader co-operation.

If you're a prince, you're a prince.
And I can't have any princes rescuing
Snow White. Here - eat the rest of this apple.

(Scieszka and Johnson, 1991)

Books like, Ten in a Bed (1983), The Jolly Postman or Other People's Letters (1986), The Frog Prince Continued (1991) and The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales (1992) make quite explicit, by direct quotation, references and allusions to other fairy tales, their intertextuality. Readers

are overtly encouraged to develop a specific literary competence, part of which is to recognise references and allusions in order to gain a fuller understanding. As a result, readers may become more conscious of the potential connections, not just in the re-worked tales, but also in longer narratives. However, as Ommundsen (1993) reminds us "...metafictionally engendered readers must be both aware of the roles they are expected to play and willing to accept them." (Ommundsen, 1993, p.77)

Scieszka and Smith are giving readers, who are prepared to participate in this different kind of reading, the opportunity to develop further the specific competence suggested by Ommundsen. Through their creative use of montage in The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales (1992), Scieszka and Smith enable readers to become aware of the concept of intertextuality in an explicit way. The giant cuts and pastes pieces of fairy tale books to make his own story and Little Red Hen's story is woven cleverly into the beginning, middle and end of the whole book. In "Cinderumpelstiltskin" two traditional stories actually merge.

In a very different way, Cross, in her realist novel Wolf (1990), has drawn explicitly on the plot, characters and themes of "Little Red Riding Hood" and makes allusions to "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" to intensify the story, making the transition from text to meaning more complex and reflexive. Her overt use of intertextual references calls attention to the material existence of the linguistic and narrative structures and, in particular, the metafictional devices employed in the story.

Intertextuality and allusion can sometimes be a problem in children's books since, first, there can be no presumption that children have been previously exposed to specific 'pretexts'²³ and, second, to the conventions of narrative. Nevertheless, intertextuality is a feature which makes the re-worked fairy tale so innovative in the way it makes various connections to the classical fairy tales of traditional literature, a part of our cultural heritage. One must remember that not all children will be familiar with a rich store of European fairy tales. Moreover, such stories can divide the children into those who recognise and enjoy the intertextual links and illusions and

²³The term 'pretexts' in the context of this study refers to traditional fairy tales (texts) with which the readers need to be familiar in order to make connections when the tale is re-used or embedded in a re-working.

those who find them tiresome because they are unfamiliar with the references.

Parody and Pastiche

'Parody' according to Ommundsen, "is a particular form of intertextuality much favoured as a means of raising reflexive concerns. Imitating, but also distancing itself from its model, the parody on the one hand invites the pleasure of recognition, on the other critical reappraisal. The object of the parody may be a specific text; it may also be a fictional convention or mode of writing." (Ommundsen, 1993, p. 10) In respect to the re-worked fairy tale all of the above may occur in either the text or the pictures or an interplay of both. Scieszka's The Frog Prince Continued (1991) is a parody of the 'they lived happily ever after' fairy tale genre, while Ross's caricatures in his folk tales parody the pretentious and the pompous.

Children do need to be aware of basic literary conventions in order to participate, and to know the old tale and know how it can be re-used and embedded with other well known fairy tales to get the most out of the books cited. Assuming that children do have this knowledge, the books become a source of humour where opposition occurs between normal expectations and some incongruous elements. As Kieran Egan puts it, "A joke is not only funny; it is potentially another of those little factories of understanding, a place where understanding can be made or expanded." (Egan, 1986 p.86) The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales (1992) does, indeed, contain many of 'these little factories' to enable readers to look at and play around with the jokes or parodistic elements presented in such a way that they can understand them.

From my observations in the classroom, many children tend to miss the point of some sophisticated parodies and satires, such as Sid Fleischman's The Whipping Boy (1990), because they have not met them at a more explicit level in their earlier reading experiences. This is most likely as parody is a metafictional device whose appeal is usually restricted to older readers, since it relies on prior knowledge of the 'hiddenness' of parody. From talking with ten and eleven year old children I have discovered that some children know only the rewritten versions of some tales. For example, one girl thought the hole in the ground in the guise of a swimming pool created when the giant fell, was the original ending, not the

one created by Tony Ross in Jack and the Beanstalk (1980). Of course she was unable to recognise the parody.

The Ahlbergs have used both parody and pastiche in their references to fairy tales and nursery rhymes in much of their work and, as a result, children and adults can respond to the jokes at literary and psychological level to varying degrees. As Catherine Stephens explains, when commenting on The Jolly Postman or Other People's Letters (1986), the book is "a collage of predictable characters framed within a postman's working day, beginning and ending with the essential cup of tea" (Stephens, 1990, p.169). Stephens believes that the Ahlbergs, in their use of historical pastiche, like the cups of tea marking beginnings and safe endings and other nostalgic and domestic references, are giving voice to their world view - one which is quite different to the one voiced in The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales (1992). The Ahlbergs' work, a fantasy in the present, reflects recent preoccupations with nostalgic, domestic and parochial values and self-questioning, while Scieszka's and Smith's work criticises past and present using surrealist and narrative techniques. For example, they parody wish fulfilment of the earlier versions by providing new endings in their collection. The Ugly Duckling remains ugly.

If children are able to recognise and understand the metafictional parody and pastiche, like the significance of the cups of tea in The Jolly Postman or Other People's Letters (1986), they are in a position to get a great deal more out of the story. In these two books there are stark contrasts. The Ahlbergs seem to be parodying present day values with their elements of nostalgia while Scieszka and Smith appear to be parodying postmodernist influences and literary theory by making inversions and reversals in nearly every aspect of the book. Hence both parodies, in different ways, seem to be making comment on life today. As Ann Moseley points out when discussing Where the Wild Things Are (1963):

All books are created out of a cultural background, which they feed back into. Books made for the very young involve an order of simplification, a distillation of what is to be conveyed, which can make them rich sources of data concerning cultural assumptions, conflict and change. It is possible to read them, not only the preoccupations of the authors, but ways in which society understands itself, or hopes itself to be.

(Moseley, 1990, p.91)

Like the Ahlbergs, Scieszka and Smith use parody with much humour and great skill from beginning to end. The collection of stories in The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales (1992) questions and turns upside down nearly every convention with which one would want children to be familiar. The whole book - its cover, title, dedication, table of contents, sequence, pagination, linearity, illustrations and individual stories - is foregrounded and mocked in such a way that it gives children wonderful opportunities to see and talk about the unconventional changes which have been paraded explicitly for them to see. For instance, the table of contents out of sequence on page nine (slippage), is seen as falling and squashing the characters from "Chicken Licken" whose feet are just protruding. Rules are being broken by parody (boundary- breaking) in both text and illustration in an obvious way to enable the reader to see how a well known fairy tale and a technical element can be intertwined to create a new version out of an old one. The very fabric of the book has been fictionalised. The sky was not falling.

The table of
Contents was.
It fell and
squashed
everybody.
The End.

(Scieszka and Smith, 1992)

Scieszka and Smith seem to have parodied deliberately the 'peripheral' features such as table of contents and end papers , which the French call peritext²⁴, to become a more conspicuous part of the book. Furthermore, they have structured the book the way more experienced readers read, where they jump backwards and forwards, sometimes straight to the ending or to check a particular illustration. The book, with its inversions and reversals, is a valuable way of building a normative sense of narrative form. When traditional stories are disturbed and subverted by the metafictional, children are brought to see in an exaggerated way the gaps that exist between

²⁴ Margaret Higonnet points out that the brevity of the actual text in children's literature throws into the foreground what French critics have called the 'peritext'. By peritext they understand 'peripheral' features such as cover, title page, etc. and above all illustrations. Thus children's literature offers a particularly rich domain for the exploration of the functions of the 'peritext'. The features which precede the actual story are sometimes referred to as the 'prelims'. "Playground of the Peritext" in Children's Literature Association Quarterly. Battle Creek, Missouri: Children's Literature Assoc., Vol. 15, No. 2, 1990.

text, story and reader, and to note conventions and patterns which they have heretofore taken for granted.

Linguistic contexts

When readers begin to explore the humour, derived from the parodistic elements in the re-worked tales, they are challenged to play with language. Younger children tend to enjoy nonsense language and odd sounding or inventive words, and as they grow older linguistic ambiguities and challenges become more important to them. June Factor notes that "the ability to play with sound, sense, rhythm and metaphor, is characteristic of children's verbal lore." (Factor, 1988, p.182) It is not surprising middle and upper primary children enjoy the humour in the re-worked tales which play with the conventions and structure of language and narrative. Yet, many teachers mainly talk with older children about the book's subject matter or the characters in the story and, perhaps, too little about the language and narrative itself. It is the condensed but, at the same time, complete form of the tales, like good poems, where the language has to be pared down which makes them more difficult to write, and hence every word has to count.

These tales offer opportunities for readers to play around with poetic language in a non-threatening way and take delight in a range of styles, whether it be Dahl's rhymes or Scieszka's modern idiom and puns. Although each story is based on, or borrows elements of fairy tale, the writers delight in their creative but precise use of words which appeal to the children's emotions and imaginations. Furthermore, they develop flat fairy tale characters into ones which embody human strengths and weaknesses, for example, Alexander T. Wolf, who invites the reader to call him Al, argues very cunningly in his version of The True Story Of The 3 Little Pigs! (1989) that:

The news reporters found out
about the two pigs I had for dinner.
They figured a sick guy going to
borrow a cup of sugar didn't
sound very exciting.
So they jazzed up the story with all of that
"Huff and puff and blow our house down."
And they made me the Big Bad Wolf.
That's it.
The real story. I was framed.

Scieszka is able to use idioms of language and thought to give greater depth to a character. Much sensitivity to idiom is needed to create and sustain the 'New York' mode of talking and thinking, and yet retain the rhythmic patterns. Furthermore, when Ross's Jack and the Beanstalk (1980) is compared with Dahl's, one can note two very different styles of language and narrative structure.

One spring morning, Jack's mum was down to the last mouldy potato. "You'll have to go to the market and sell the cow" she told her son, "then we can buy some food." No one wanted to sell the cow but it had to be done.

(Ross, 1980)

Jack's mother said, We're stony broke !
'Go out and find some wealthy bloke
'Who'll buy our cow. Just say she's sound
'And worth at least a hundred pound.
'But don't you let him know
'That she's as old as billy-o.'

(Dahl & Blake, 1982)

In Ross's version, the language is in the mode of the traditional folk tale beginning with "One spring morning" and using a predictable phrase like "go to the market". However, the word "mouldy" signals that it might not be what it seems. On the other hand Dahl's version, in rhyming verse, is overtly subversive in the way it tells the tale. Children naturally respond to the exaggerations and, in particular, rhyming words like "stony broke" and "wealthy bloke" and most find his version easy to memorise and one they enjoy to chant.

The titles of re-worked fairy tales, alone, are captivating in the way in which the writers play around with words; for example, at one extreme there are tales like, The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales (1992), Ten in a Bed (1983), Revolting Rhymes (1982) and Princess Smartypants (1986), all of which are obvious parodies, and then there are others, like The True Story Of The 3 Little Pigs (1989), which give hints that they may not be what they seem. The writers, in their use of language structures, are modelling different ways of narrating commonly known fairy tales, and thereby a variety of language and narrative patterns which play on words.

Point of view

Some writers and illustrators, in the way they have structured fairy tales in experimental forms of writing and illustration, demonstrate how traditional points of view can be stretched and, in so doing, direct the reader to consider what is being emphasised. Earlier in the chapter, the cinematic influence on books was mentioned, in that the writer/illustrator can tell the story in first or third person, where the way in which the view is pre-chosen for the reader/viewer is taken into account. Many children by the upper primary years are able to put themselves into the position of another person and, therefore, have their thinking stimulated along different lines, by looking at things from a different perspective. Moreover, these stories allow the children to become conscious of how the structural devices function.

Re-worked fairy tales differ from the traditional ones in that they are often more self-conscious, whereas the earlier ones were usually told in the impersonal third person, and thus avoided reflection and rarely offered a direct interpretation of events. Furthermore, the third person perspective tends to be limited, not omniscient. In the more reflexive use of shifting points of view, from a first and third person perspective, there appears to be no limits to the knowledge of the storyteller. The stories illustrate how the omniscient narrator may be objective or intrusive. Scieszka and Smith, as previously mentioned, include the intrusive narrator who does more than just tell the story. The intrusive narrator intrudes upon it to the point of making comments to both the characters in the stories and the readers. For example, in the beginning of The Frog Prince Continued (1991) the narrator shares his inside knowledge:

Well, just let's say they lived sort of
happily for a long time.
Okay, so they weren't so happy.
In fact they were miserable.

(Scieszka and Johnson, 1991)

By comparing Scieszka's beginning with the 'Once upon a time there was...' of the traditional third person narrative, children can gain an understanding that within the omniscient narrator form, the point of view is not limited and confined to only telling the story relative to one character. Scieszka is inviting his readers to discuss who is relating the story and what is their role. In The True Story Of The 3 Little Pigs! (1989) by A. Wolf, as told

to Jon Scieszka (narrated in the first person), readers are able to examine the role of the narrator and ask, "Is it the author or some separate persona narrating?" and "Is the story to be believed?" or "What really happened?"

Endings

The re-worked tale frequently varies the ending of the traditional fairy tale and, thereby, offers children unconventional ways in which many of the complications may be resolved. For example, in The Frog Prince Continued (1991) the stereotypical 'happy ending' is questioned at the beginning. The ending is unexpected and provides the opportunity for children to discuss the question, "Could this ending have been foreseen?" The discussion of resolution may lead, in some stories, to revelation and irony, for example, in Hearn's original fairy tale The Porcelain Cat (1990) where the secret is revealed in the pictures, not the text.

The metafictional stories in The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales (1992) provide developing readers with very different endings, ones which are frequently found in adult, reflexive novels, like Fowles' The French Lieutenant's Woman (1970), not the expected ones in traditional fairy tales. Scieszka and Johnson create endings which require children to read and interpret visual codes, as well as understand the twists in the text. However, as Hunt points out, "It is a truism that in early developmental stages, children prefer stories with an element of 'closure' - that is, where there is a 'sense of ending'. More than this, they prefer that something is resolved, that normality is restored, that security is emphasised." (Hunt, 1991, p. 127) Scieszka and Johnson are able to restore normality and emphasise security very cleverly for the younger reader in the ending of The Frog Prince Continued (1991), but not with the expected ending of earlier versions. Furthermore, they provide greater mental challenges in "The Hair and the Rabbit", one of the stories in The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales (1992) where there is a total lack of closure; the hair keeps growing and there is no out right winner to the race. Such a story introduces children at a much earlier age to open-ended and ambiguous endings, by the explicit way they are structured.

Understanding the structure of a narrative and how different authors play around with this structure

The way in which writers treat point of view, plot, style, characterisation, setting, mood and theme in the re-worked fairy tale directs children to focus on certain features. For example, 'Once upon a time' and its problem-solution story structure is often made more complex by the changes the writer has made. Given the familiar themes, the strong vigorous language and the relatively short stories, children are in a better position, when reading the more challenging versions, to reflect critically on the ways the stories have been transformed, and how they vary from the basic story frame of the more traditional ones.

Children, by Year Five, are usually familiar with the notion that if narratives are to be entertaining, something out of the ordinary always needs to happen - the characters have to be confronted with some sort of problem or complication which needs to be resolved. Nonetheless, as teachers, many of us tend to assume that the concept of narrative has become internalised and we do not recognise the value of exploring narrative with children for fear of making our literature programmes too formal. Since many of the re-worked fairy tales tend to contain more complex structures and devices than the original ones on which they are based, they offer children a way of looking at how the writers/illustrators disturb the stability and, indeed, the stability itself. The children are able to compare the complication in an original version with a fresh, unexpected one.

However, the main purpose of comparing and contrasting should not be to foster critical thinking as a skill, but rather to enhance analytical and divergent thinking in respect to the specific text to build literary competence. Such a competence or textual strategy belongs to the 'reader-oriented' model referred to earlier where the readers are required to recognise more than one level of meaning. Ommundsen (1993) puts it this way "...metafictionally engendered readers must be both aware of the roles they are expected to play and willing to accept them. (Ommundsen, 1993, p.77)

For instance, the split story of Browne's Hansel and Gretel (1981) where the text follows the Grimms' version, and the illustrations, with their allusions

and symbolic shapes, tell the story on another level, challenges readers to a different way of reading and understanding narrative. Readers are invited to see how Browne is creating the 'possible world' of child abandonment and establishing an 'atmosphere' of fear and anxiety in the illustrations, foreshadowing the action to follow. The visual orientation gives more information than the text and, thereby, enables readers to see how the details enhance the later development of the story. Moreover, the way the story is resolved pictorially tends to be more open-ended than the written text, and hence it can take on different meanings about the relationship between the children and their father.

By joint exploration of books cited, the teacher can guide children to see how narrative works and use this awareness, not only in relation to re-worked fairy tales, but in the stories they read and the ones they create. In discussions children can be given the opportunity, in respect to both written and illustrative texts, to use the critical language of narrative genre: orientation, complication, resolution and re-orientation or coda to see how the subject matter is selected and sequenced before going further into the text to look at specific aspects²⁵. If children are encouraged in explorations of how particular narratives work, they may make discoveries, connections and generalisations about the way the writer has made deliberate choices, and what he/she has done to disturb the coherence. For example, they can be encouraged to question why different aspects of the written text are illustrated and vice versa, and what did the writer/illustrator hope to achieve. In The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales (1992), readers are able to see the explicit way in which Scieszka and Smith parody current genre theory by the way in which they have used metafictional devices to structure the book. Of course the children do not need to be aware of the terminology of literary theory at an adult level.

Summary

Recent writers/illustrators appear to have made visible the conventions and structures in such a way to provoke children to discuss how the text is working and, thereby, increase their metacognitive awareness. This in effect is to begin to develop an understanding of their own reading processes. It is

²⁵Derewianka, Beverly, Exploring How Texts Works. Sydney: Primary English Teachers Association, 1990.

the ways these writers/illustrators tell their stories which is important, equally as important as the stories they tell. For example, Dahl's and Blake's updated version of "Cinderella" in Revolting Rhymes (1982), in which the Ugly Sisters lose their heads, and Cinderella chooses to marry an ordinary jam-maker instead of the prince, delights most children despite the occasional "awful" or "gory" bits, the sheer excess. Dahl signals from the beginning that this version is to be different and mildly 'shocking'. Children usually accept a new set of conventions throughout rather than having a conventional set abruptly challenged at the end.²⁶

I guess you think you know this story.
You don't. The real one is much more gory.
The phoney one, the one you know,
Was cooked up years and years ago.
And made to sound all soft and sappy
Just to keep the children happy.
(Dahl & Blake 1982, p.5)

However, Moira Robinson (1987) refers to this kind of humour as defiance humour as she believes it does not demand mental agility on the part of the reader. Nonetheless, Revolting Rhymes (1982), with its explicit structure and the robust humour, is the kind of book which many children seem to enjoy, and it makes a good starting point to explore the many possibilities of parody, satire and irony. Children, then, may be ready to accept the challenges offered by less explicit tales.

This raises the important question of how far young readers can be expected to respond to the covert significance of the metafictional devices in the re-workings. Obviously much of the parody and pastiche, for example, in The Jolly Postman or Other People's Letters (1986) would belong to an adult frame of reference with the middle and upper primary school child increasingly becoming aware of what is on offer. Thus a seven year old, a seventeen year old and a seventy year old may read it on different levels, or with different ways of connecting the work with other meanings.

By focusing on the way a range of re-worked fairy tales are structured, I have sought to demonstrate, like Meek (1988), that text and pictures offer diverse opportunities, that is texts may actively teach how to read, reflect and

²⁶Protherough, Robert, "The stories children tell" in Corcoran, B. and Evans, E. (eds.) Readers Texts, Teachers. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1987.

question. However, Hunt adds, "In a sense as Meek's argument shows, texts do not, in themselves teach anything. They contain potential meanings structured in complex linguistic and semantic code systems. Our access to those meanings depends on our decoding skills. If we are to understand what children tell us about texts it is useful to know just what the codes are, and what skills we need to unravel them." (Hunt, 1988, p. 213) The teacher's knowledge and understanding of the codes and conventions writers use to construct their stories, and how the teacher uses this knowledge, are the premises upon which this study is based.

CHAPTER THREE

THE EMOTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED BY THE FAIRY TALE:

RE-WORKED IN THE PICTURE BOOK AND A LONGER NOVEL

Bruno Bettelheim in his acclaimed book The Uses of Enchantment (1976) opened up fairy tales to much broader and more meaningful study. However, in the last decade there have been critics, like Tucker (1984) and Nodelman (1992), who claim that Bettelheim had an over-simplified view of the role of the reader. Whilst he has produced an informed study about the tales themselves, his view that the tales start where the child really is in his or her psychological and emotional being, has been questioned. Given that the different interpretations offered during recent years reflect a range of perspectives, I sought mainly to focus on the way particular writers put their individual stamp on their re-workings, and how they invite children to explore aspects of human nature and behaviour at a more conscious level. It was not my intention in this study to enter into a debate about the psychic processes of the unconscious, but rather to see how each writer/illustrator makes obvious the elements or devices used to take the reader inside the emotional event and a particular point of view.

Although it appears that many of the re-worked tales tend to convey the lighter or humorous side of our human condition, this is where we begin to feel a part of the larger human community in which we understand and accept our emotions. Hence the tales, where each writer engages in his own world view, can be seen as those embodying human strengths and weaknesses. A range of perspectives are offered, through fairy tale characters and different settings, that allow children to stand back and examine their own feelings, inner conflicts and responses. For this to occur a new relationship between writer and reader is offered, one which reduces the distance between them. Frequently parody, satire and intertextual reference to other well known fairy tales achieve this by involving older readers more closely in collaboration with the text to compose a coherent story and to enable them to focus on the roles and relationships portrayed within the tales. These elements, mentioned in the previous chapter, are

used as devices to delineate character, and to trigger different responses in children, usually very different from those found to traditional fairy tales where the narrator and the writer are anonymous. In the earlier tales the narrator is rarely self conscious and avoids reflection.²⁷

Themes

It is the universality of the context and the layered meaning in these stories that ensure that children will be challenged to explore the inner landscapes of thought and feeling. The writers/illustrators have frequently used metafictional devices to focus on themes; for example Scieszka and Johnson in The Frog Prince Continued (1991) question the stereotypical ending 'happily ever after' by using it as the framework for the entire story. Integration of form and content in this manner is a key characteristic of a metafictional text where it draws attention to itself without being contrived. This parody, like other re-worked tales, allows the reader, through a relatively simple story, to become aware of aspects of the human condition. At the same time the story is multi-layered, multi-thematic and linguistically conscious which adds another dimension to the theme. At one level The Frog Prince Continued (1991) directly satirises both male and female roles in marriage. People do not live 'happily ever after'. There is a nagging wife and a husband who will not go out and slay a dragon as a 'proper' prince should. The decorative image of the three wilting flowers on the second page of the story, at a symbolic level, is an early signal that all is not well in the marriage. Nonetheless, the tale still retains what Anne Wilson terms its 'prime burden' of the old tale.

One of the proposed truths to emerge in this particular story is that, contrary to what popular culture would have us believe, happiness is not always possible. However, the Frog Prince and his princess do eventually find happiness when they see good in each other and 'they hop off happily ever after' to their pond. In the end of this second story, it upholds traditional family patterns. Through its subtext, like many traditional fairy tales, it deals with life and the nature of being. The Frog Prince, on his journey, does not succumb to the temptations of the wider world but returns to his princess. No broken marriage here! Nonetheless, it is left to the readers to discover the moral framework which is operating in the book and make

²⁷Benton, Michael & Fox, Geoff Teaching Literature Nine to Fourteen. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985 (p.38).

their own judgements. For more experienced readers subtext is not only apparent in the plot but in various aspects of the story's construction. For younger readers especially in shared readings, the text provides concrete examples and occasions from which these implied layers of meaning may be brought into conscious review. For example, when the dedication is considered, it is one of many devices which offers meaning; it seems that, perhaps, Scieszka is celebrating his own family, young and old.

To Mom and Dad
JS

To our Grandparents
for cookies, tree climbing,
dancing, and frog hunts.

SJ and LF

Thus, with each re-reading of both form and content the reader is able to construct an image of the kind of person who is telling the story; its implied author, one who loves magic and fun. This soon becomes obvious when the Frog Prince is seen longingly poking at an insect motif on the wallpaper with his worm-like tongue. The prince has not quite lost his 'frogginess'. There are a number of themes woven into the text and pictures. There is the journey motif of the quest where the prince seeks to be changed back into a frog. Scieszka and Johnson have given readers a new view of this old theme, so that it can be examined from a number of metafictional moments in this version. These metafictional devices assist the reader to note the patterns of both the old and new versions while at the same time grasping something more of how stories may be told and retold. The use of such devices has increased the story's complexity yet added also to the opportunities for the young reader to become more knowing and aesthetically experienced. The new version also revisits and evokes again some of the profoundly important emotions of the old tale but in a new context of action. Narrative and emotion are foregrounded for readers' attention in the reading of this work.

Much has been written about the emotional quality of Browne's Hansel and Gretel (1981) and, as Chambers points out, "[it] shows how an old tale that offers itself to contemporary story understandings can integrate with newly self conscious narrative techniques - the old tradition living still, because it

in any case belongs to the deep exploration of inner space." (Chambers, 1986, p.67) It is the inner realities I wish to refer to in this chapter, in both the text and pictures, that is how the external concrete objects in the pictures increase density of meanings by linking the plot to the theme. Browne, through his surrealist pictures, explores the theme of personal survival strategies, and provides opportunities for readers to reflect upon the nature of society and its complex values.

The Frog Prince Continued (1991) and Hansel and Gretel (1981) are both indicative of the different values, beliefs and biases of their makers; Scieszka and Johnson upholding traditional family values, but at the same time ridiculing stereotypes, and Browne portraying how things really are. Jane Doonan in a study of Browne's Hansel and Gretel (1981) says, "Although our popular culture keeps on playing Happy Families and shows us advertisements where laughing dads presumably come packaged along with the electronic games, and mothers stay twenty seven forever, with never a cross word, children know that real families are not like that." (Doonan, 1983, p.128) Ten years on this shallow fantasy is still relentlessly promoted by the media.

Symbol and the extended metaphor

Browne, like other narrative artists, uses visual metaphor. In Hansel and Gretel (1981) readers are given the opportunity to look further at patterning throughout the story. His repetition of motifs, bars and birds, changes Hansel and Gretel (1981) from an illustrated text to one that provides metaphorical links with ambiguous allusions. The bars of the beds, the bird cage, the vertical line of the trees all indicate a kind of pervasive imprisonment. Furthermore, Browne, with the use of concrete objects, shows how metaphor can extend the meaning of a story - extend it into a whole other field of language. Rather than labelling the recurring objects and motifs as symbols, readers become aware of the structural function of the bars and birds as they change shape and proportion - they take on a new power.²⁸ When children read them they bring other associations to the story; the metaphor sets up resonances for them. For example, the first cage

²⁸Doonan, Jane "The object lesson: picture books of Anthony Browne" in Word and Image: Journal of Verbal and Visual Enquiry. Basingstoke, Hants: Taylor and Francis, Vol.2, No. 2, April-June, 1986 (p.60).

appears on the title page providing the initial sign of what the story is about with the pattern of bars changing from picture to picture. Browne uses these devices in his pictures to help readers to focus on the meaning behind the objects which reveal, not material reality, but inner reality where thought and feeling powerfully intertwine²⁹. His Hansel and Gretel (1981) is about abandonment and betrayal in a contemporary context.

Hansel and Gretel (1981) is indicative of how fresh and original metaphors, both verbal and visual, are used to create feelings and moods in many of the re-worked fairy tales, rather than tired and trite ones. They enable readers to think about meaning, not directly stated, and how it affects them.

How has the writer/illustrator done it?

What is the story really about?

How have aspects of the human condition been abstracted and presented in such a way that they are illuminated?

Are there universal truths?

Irony

Like many other picture books, the re-worked fairy tale frequently teases readers to look at the illustrations time after time to see the joke or realise the contradiction. These stories, with their ability to carry one message in the text and another in the illustration offer particular opportunities for irony. Irony is one of the most pervasive and complex elements of fiction, and its basis is discrepancy: between expectation and result, appearance and reality, statement and meaning, delusion and understanding³⁰.

Fairy tales, as previously stated, are not what they seem and there is often more in them than what meets the eye or the ear or the brain at the first reading or hearing. Hence, children from a young age are introduced to what Wayne Booth terms stable irony³¹ but are not consciously aware of it.

²⁹Doonan, Jane, "Talking Pictures 'A New Look at Hansel and Gretel' " in Signal: Approaches to Children's Books. Stroud, Glos: Thimble Press No. 42, September, 1983.

³⁰Stott, Jon " 'Its not what you expect': teaching irony to third graders" Children's Literature in Education. New York: Agathon Press, Vol. 13, No. 4. 1982.

³¹Stable and unstable irony are terms taken from the work of W.C. Booth, A Rhetoric of Irony. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1974. In the context of this study stable irony applies to a relatively limited scope of irony which is within the range of comprehension of children in the middle and upper primary years. They have most likely been dealing with it for some

An example here might be the lies of the witch in Hansel and Gretel (1981). Re-worked fairy tales like those of Ross, Scieszka, Briggs and French challenge older readers to recognise the ironies by the clues presented in both the text and illustrations. Often, on the first reading, the reader along with the protagonist, is a victim of stable irony but on subsequent readings implicit clues on the surface are picked up, usually in the incongruities. An appreciation of the incongruities will lead readers towards a fuller understanding of the deeper ironies and themes, such as revelation of some aspects of human behaviour.

Michael Hearn's original fairy tale The Porcelain Cat (1990) is an example of a story with an ironical ending where an element of human nature is revealed. Younger children tend to be dissatisfied with the ending this story provides because the vital clue to the ironic conclusion is usually missed in the picture on the back cover or misinterpreted or they have not built up any expectations of ambiguity and irony. When the sorcerer decides to turn his porcelain cat into a real cat to catch rats, he sends his apprentice Nickon (word play on nick-off) to find the charm needed for the spell. Nickon brings back, from his hazardous quest, a vial of blood which the sorcerer brews and pours over the cat, bringing it to life. However, the cat leaps into the air to chase a rat and lands on the stone floor shattering into a thousand pieces. The sorcerer exclaims that he did not like the cat anyway and goes about his daily business.

The layout of this book is in the traditional style of a fairy tale with decorated framing and gentle water colour illustrations. Nonetheless, there are clues to suggest that all is not what it seems, ones which are disguised in the setting, in the characters' names and in fairy tale conventions. The final pictures subtly give voice to the ironical sequence of endings³², first, the sorcerer's and, second, the apprentice's. On the back cover it is revealed that Nickon really has been instrumental in freeing the cat from its porcelain prison. Thus the reader, if perceptive, can see the transformed cat in the guise of a small bird and the knowing smile on the face of Nickon, who may

time but not have been consciously aware of its presence. Booth draws attention to "the inevitable presence of victims, real or imagined, in all stable irony". (p. 27)

³²My decision to cite Michael Hearn's The Porcelain Cat, Boston, Little Brown, 1990, emanated from a conversation with a Grade One teacher who had recently shared the book with her class. She had noted the children's disappointment with the ending and she, herself, had been unaware of the second ending because she had not examined it closely beforehand.

not have gained the traditional rewards of wealth or increased stature, but has gained contentment and used his power successfully. On another level, a further element of human nature to be revealed is the rejection or dismissal of something which fails to achieve its purpose.

"Nickon, clean up this mess!" the sorcerer shouted. I never liked that porcelain cat any way!"

(Hearn, 1990)

The Porcelain Cat, unlike previous books mentioned, is not as obvious in its style, content and ambiguities. It, therefore, requires a more experienced younger reader to appreciate its ironies. Such a book is indicative of how the re-worked elements of fairy tale are not always explicit.

Satire

Humour, in the picture books of re-worked fairy tales, is explored in both the text and the pictures. Some of the narrative artists, for example Tony Ross, use satire in the visual narrative to expose aspects of human behaviour, chiefly through cartoon characters, irony and parody. According to Nodelman, there is "...a long tradition behind the use of visual narrative for satiric purposes, beginning with Hogarth's depictions of the various failings of his own [eighteenth century] society and including the comedies of the silent era of movies." (Nodelman, 1988, p.198)

Although Jane Doonan admires Ross as a gifted artist, she has some reservations about the way in which he interprets folk and fairy tales and, furthermore, believes that adults may question the views about life that he offers children. She suggests that he is at his best when working at a conscious level of descriptive detail and development of character. It is my belief that while helping children to focus on the explicit satirical features in Ross's work, they may become aware of his intentional ironic tone and witty use of metaphor as their literary competence develops, and thus begin to appreciate his social comment. For younger children such social commentary would normally remain at an unconscious level of thinking. For instance, there would be few children who would understand the significance of Puss's wild golden eyes and golden boots in his Puss in Boots (1981). However, as their literary competence develops, they may find

Puss's greed to be similar to that of King Midas but with different consequences.

In this study I suggest that children might notice certain satirical features or other metafictional features which otherwise might have been missed if they have not had the opportunity to become more aware of different aspects of interpretation. These may have remained unconscious. The shared questioning and focusing of the satire, irony and metaphor in this particular work all can combine to show young readers the expectations works may have of readers.

Fairy tale realism

Many contemporary novels for children are in their own ways versions of classic fairy tales. However, they have been changed for modern times. Writers such as Tolkien, Alan Garner, Susan Cooper, William Mayne, Ted Hughes and many others have used or 'retold' myths in modern settings or in new guises, but until recently little attention seems to be given to books that explicitly weave a fairy tale into a contemporary, realist novel. Nonetheless, there are many realistic stories or films like "Pretty Woman" or "Working Girl" which can be considered to be versions of a 'classic' fairy tale with their 'Cinderella' pattern. These are not always 'rag-to-riches' stories, but rather "Trial, Recognition and Judgement" (Cook, 1969, p.105).

As John Gough puts it, "In real life there are no supernatural fairy godmothers, and no magic to make people love each other. What had often been left as symbolic in the traditional fairy tale may become explicitly handled in modern transmissions." (Gough, 1990, pp. 103-4) For instance, in traditional versions of fairy tales the death of the parent can stand as rejection. In modern fiction this may be replaced with the breakup of marriage or a relationship which become the source of pain and sense of personal rejection. This is, indeed, true of Cassy who, in Gillian Cross's Wolf (1990), is subject to her father's rejection which contributes to her struggle to maintain her strength of character. Cook (1969) calls such a struggle 'retribution' where there is testing and maturing of character.

Gillian Cross's Carnegie Award-winning novel Wolf (1990) is an example of how a longer narrative for older children, not only uses the "Little Red Riding hood" pattern but overtly uses the 'child- alone' motif with fairy tale

elements in new ways to create emotional depths. The extended metaphor, 'wolf', and recurring dream sequences of "Little Red Riding Hood" enable readers to enter Cassy's 'inner space' and share her agonies.

The dream sequences at alternate chapter endings, with their chilling images of encroaching forest, winter aconite and the false refuge of the fairy tale cottage run parallel to Cassy's journey, where like Little Red Riding Hood she dons her hooded cape, and then is sent *from* her grandma's, through the darkening urban forest to visit her mother, Goldie. Cassy feels compelled to ignore Granny Phelan's warning and puts her address on the postcard, placing her grandmother in great danger from Cassy's father, Mick Phelan, I.R.A. terrorist, who is the Cray Hill bomber. Like Little Red Riding Hood, there is retribution for not heeding a warning, but unlike the fairy tale, there is, initially, no rescuing woodcutter. Cassy is a contemporary active female. Cassy must take things into her own hands and, in so doing, she must come to terms with the truth that her father would sacrifice his own family for the cause.

Wolf (1990) as described by Agnes Nieuwenhuizen is "a tense, complex, intricate, brilliantly imagined and executed novel"³³, and demonstrates the way in which the power of fairy tale frame and reference in realist fiction can offer opportunities for young people to explore meaning in an emotionally and aesthetically satisfying work. The ever present metaphor, wolf, constantly changing to create fear and mystery enables readers to experience a range of emotions, as Cassy's dream slowly surfaces into consciousness and she accepts her father for what he is. One might even claim that there are several metaphors of 'wolf' in this story. In Jungian terms, the wolf is a tangible symbol for our darkness. The wolf is also like the terrorist an endangered species. However, for the purpose of this study, it is the way in which Gillian Cross has constructed Wolf (1990), with its relatively simple plot intertwined with "Little Red Riding Hood", that offers readers, through their previous reading experiences, a conscious way of understanding what is happening to Cassy, and how it is the very fairy tale, used as a metafictional device to drive the plot forward.

Some novels blend the quest motif with elements of fairy tale; for example, Cynthia Voigt's Homecoming (1984) features the four abandoned Tillerman

³³Nieuwenhuizen, Agnes Good Books for Teenagers. Melbourne: Mandarin, 1992 (pp. 30-31).

children who set out on Route 1 to find their Aunt Cilla's house, and in Part Two their grandmother's farm. The story of survival has many parallels to the fearful wanderings of "Hansel and Gretel" in the forest, although not as overtly presented as the fairy tale in Wolf (1990). The allusions, however, in Homecoming (1984) are there to be found. For example, the first prominent reference to "Hansel and Gretel" occurs when Dicey orders James to keep the younger children occupied by telling them their favourite story, "Hansel and Gretel". Later, en route to the farm with their money exhausted, they seek work and, as Dicey approaches Mr. Rudyard's house, the first thing that confronts her is that its "yard was a three sided cage"(p. 220). Treated like slaves and guarded by a ferocious and hungry dog, the children pick Mr. Rudyard's crop but make their escape with a 'trail of crumbs'. As the Tillermans flee their captor, chased by the dog, they create a diversion by scattering the buttered biscuits which Mr. Rudyard has brought for their lunch. The fugitives are able to make good the break because the hungry dog stops to eat the trail of biscuits instead of pressing the pursuit. (pp. 224-228)

Both these books fit into the school of realism, yet have fairy tale features in very different ways. Cross has used the form of fairy tale more self consciously through the dream sequences and explicit use of motifs, indicative of innovative changes in narrative structures. Whereas Voigt's allusions to crumbs and cages and patternings are more subtle and implicit. In the latter the links are not as easy to establish. However, they are both ritualistic accounts of the gain of knowledge that go beyond the normal narrative of fairy tales so that the effect is satisfying on many levels. Cross and Voigt, in different ways, have subverted the form, and extended it well beyond the one dimensional characters sometimes found in fairy tales to articulate profound truths about life.

Whereas in fairy tales, motifs are used but in more complex ways to develop characters and situations. In Wolf (1990) the only photograph of Cassy's father, a solemn boy, becomes an image of the innocence to which Cassy unconsciously clings, an image which gives her hope that perhaps he is capable of loving her as he was once loved. Almost until the end she nurses this hope. However, with the turn of events her interior landscape does change as she comes to terms with her new found knowledge. The shattered glass of the photograph becomes an image of the breaking of the dream, since nothing, it appears, will change the person who is her father.

This story is not a fairy tale about wish-fulfilment but one which uses the motifs and patterns to create deeper layers of meaning about adolescence, family and loyalty.

Summary

Whether it be a realistic novel built on a fairy tale pattern using related archetypal psychological elements or an experimental re-worked tale, the writers/illustrators cited in this study offer the reader new ways of reading or viewing their work. For instance, older readers may see the characters in new settings trying to come to grips with a range fears and anxieties. Through the structural devices which have been employed, motifs, archetypes and story patterns take on new meaning to enable the reader to reach an understanding of the emotional journeys and quests experienced by the characters or the ways in which human behaviour is illuminated, whether it be Ross's Puss in Boots (1981) or Cross's Wolf (1990).

The reader may then ask:

What would I do if I found myself in that situation?
Do I or do I not come from people like that?
Is there a part of me who understands them?

(Meek, 1988, p.2)

Such questions are indicative of the intent to provide emotional opportunities so that the children during the programme could note and find a language to discuss, enjoy and share the books referred to in order to add to their own powers of reflection. In this context their existing perceptions may be challenged and some children may 'go beyond the text' to think about larger issues a book may have raised.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONVERSATIONS: MOVING FROM SHARING TO DIALOGUE

Changing narrative structures

The fairy tale - re-worked in different ways - varies considerably in its construction, but none could be labelled 'traditional' in the literary sense. The 'signs' left by the writers/illustrators, as discussed in the previous chapters, belong to metafictional writing that calls for a different kind of reading, one which demands complex, deconstructing and reconstructing skills for the younger reader. Perhaps some years ago, after a first reading of Garner's Red Shift (1973), I would not have encountered so many difficulties with its narrative structure if, as a younger reader, I had experienced books which required a whole new relationship between the reader and the text. In Red Shift (1973), a third person narrator to guide inexperienced readers to an understanding, even at an entertainment level of 'what happens next', seems to be absent. For such readers considerable intervention from an 'experienced' reader to guide them is required, for instance, an explanation of the metaphor 'Red Shift' and how it relates to three worlds spanning two thousand years.

Red Shift (1973) is, perhaps, an extreme example of a metafictional text but the discontinuities of such a text are indicative of reflexive writing where the reader must reconstitute the book into a meaningful whole and become "a producer and not merely a consumer of text". (Barthes, 1975 ,p.2)³⁴ A writer such as Garner is still considered to be experimental and unorthodox though, increasingly, metafictional elements may be found in mainstream contemporary fiction for adults and older readers, and in picture books for younger readers. Thus, it is my purpose to use particular re-worked fairy tales, for example The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales (1992), where metafictional devices are explicitly used, to give younger children the opportunity to become aware of layered meanings and

³⁴S/Z, Barthes's celebrated study of Balzac's story, Sarrasine, is usually cited as the archetypal example of the reader responding to the text through its structural organisation. S/Z (R. Miller Trans.) New York: Hill and Wang, 1975.

symbolic complexity through the evident constructedness³⁵ of the text and illustrations. The work of writers/illustrators, like Scieszka, Johnson, Smith and the Ahlbergs, in different ways, provide emerging readers with opportunities to note how literary works are constructed. It appears as if these writers/illustrators are well aware of the possible narrative competence of young readers and present complexities from which an articulate literary and aesthetic awareness can grow. As Meek points out, "Where children make an early entry into the rich diversity of available modern texts, their expectations of later reading are open and eager." (Meek, 1992, p.20)

The role of the teacher

For children to operate at the 'aesthetic' end of the reading spectrum, rather than the literal or superficial, changes the role of the teacher considerably. As teachers, we need to be expert 'orienteers', not so that we can tell young readers what they must see, but in order to choose illuminating works, ask leading questions and model interpretive strategies³⁶. In the previous two chapters, the focus was on the cognitive and emotional opportunities offered by the re-worked fairy tales to the reader. However, when guiding our readers to take advantage of these opportunities, we need to create situations which encourage a three-way interaction between a teacher, other readers and a text³⁷, not in a formal way, but rather what one might call 'structured' play³⁸. Many of the re-worked fairy tales create for the readers opportunities to 'play' around with their narrative and linguistic structures thereby, stimulating responses that may be called personal, intellectually more rigorous, more flexible, creative, diverse, sceptical and analytical.

Tony Ross, for example, in his illustrations in most of his works, provides a detective game whereby the readers are invited to find incongruities and, as

³⁵David Lewis "The Constructedness of Texts: Picture books and the Metafiction" in Signal: Approaches to Children's Books. Stroud, Glos: Thimble Press, No. 62, May, 1990.

³⁶Connor, Jenni Whatever Happened to Heidi? Paper prepared for the 16th Australian Reading Association National Conference, Adelaide (July, 199, pp. 1).

³⁷Cairney, Trevor Other Worlds The Endless Possibilities of Literature. Melbourne: Nelson, 1990. In his book Cairney bases his work on the premise that classrooms should be places that provide opportunities for students to learn about language as they relate to other people, communities of readers.

³⁸Many of the works which were used in this study require a certain playful relationship to develop between them and the reader. Jon Scieszka's and Lane Smith's The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales New York: Viking, 1992 is one which features a ludic quality which reveals to readers the possibilities of literary play.

a result, they can begin to pose questions about the comic style of characterisation in the unfairy tale-like settings. The game of searching for jokes can lead readers, with guidance, to enjoy the vigorous mental challenges Ross offers in his books as a whole. When this play encourages readers to experiment with new forms, they are making a response, and the essence of the game-playing lies in sharing one's readings with others. The teacher needs to be able to pose questions and offer responses which allow children to concentrate on different features, not merely ones which follow a predictable format such as:

What did you think of the story?
What did you like about it? Why?
How did you feel about the main character? Why?
Did the author describe the setting well? How?
What was the message the author was trying to get across?
How would you describe the author's style?

This type of questioning does not allow children to concentrate on different features where there may be many responses. Chambers argues that "...teachers must find a repertoire of questions that assist rather than hinder" (1985, p.154). He goes on further to say that we should ban the question *Why?* as it often results in a blank stare. It has the impact of asking the child to provide the right answer with a head on approach. With colleagues, Chambers³⁹ has devised a conversational style, beginning many of his questions with the phrase, *Tell Me*. Furthermore, he suggests that the teacher is both facilitator and guide, and points out that, as the framework of questions becomes internalised, the discussion about the story or poem becomes more open-ended (Appendix 1). It is not his intention that every question be used, but rather that the framework is to be the basis of an exploration which focuses on readers' experiences of the text. Thus content and meaning are approached through exploration of form and pattern.

Explorations, like those advocated by Chambers (1985), are associated with reader response, focusing on reading as *transaction*⁴⁰ (Rosenblatt, 1978), with

³⁹Chambers, Aidan *Booktalk*. London: The Bodley Head, 1985. The questions in the "Tell Me" framework are both *phenomenological* and *structural* in nature with many of the questions focusing on form, "How the story is told", not on content "What the story is about". (pp. 170-173)

⁴⁰Rosenblatt stresses the transactional nature of reading with the reader's role as essentially that of co creator and recruiter. She believes in the importance of aesthetic reading.

the idea that readers bring meaning to and take meaning from a text. Squire, in a review of the history and research related to reader response theory concluded that, "...the task of the teacher of literature...is to focus on the transaction between the book and the reader, on the literary experience itself, and on ways of extending and deepening it." (Squire, 1989,p.9) However, as mentioned in the introduction to this study, the difficulty sometimes arises when teachers seek to go beyond the sharing of spontaneous responses. Teachers need to find a balance through which they can help children develop literary insight, aesthetic judgement and continue to enjoy their engagement with the works.

The dialogue, in which teachers extend interpretative possibilities, calls for sensitive intervention. The term dialogue has been used in the sense that the children will participate in edifying and constructive conversations, whereby the teacher is more actively involved in stimulating the response. As Cairney says in respect to structured response, "Often student responses will be a direct result of a situation the teacher has structured, a question that has been asked, and so on." (Cairney, 1990, p.33) Whilst her role appears to be a subtle one, the teacher needs to help the children move from their first readings to reconsider what the text and pictures might mean in respect of their discoveries and those of others, and to assist them to develop their responses collectively. This, furthermore, highlights the need for children to be able to read and talk with other children in smaller groups, as well as in whole class discussion. Sometimes a whole class discussion can lead to teacher domination, where it appears the 'right answer' is being sought. The situation of three-way interaction has to be thoughtfully created.

Learning literary codes and conventions

In their explorations of a text, whether it be a poem, a re-worked fairy tale or a longer novel, children can be helped to learn the conventions and codes of literature in order to participate fully in conversations about the way writers/illustrators have constructed their work. If children have a conscious access to literary codes they are, even as emerging readers, in a better position to begin to develop critical skills which belong to the school

of deconstruction theory.⁴¹ According to Hardage, "...students have a natural tendency to deconstruct, until you train them out of it ...it is their urge to play with something, which includes both taking it apart as well as tossing it around." (Hardage, 1992, p.214) Nonetheless, the kind of focused play advocated by Hardage does require a knowledge of conventions by which literature communicates, which are mostly exclusive to literature, and sometimes art. These conventions, whether they be literature, art or film are not generally learnable from other linguistic experiences.

As Protherough (1987) argues, "When we talk to children about their reading, we are not - as some adults conveniently seem to imagine - reacting directly to their experiences of the book, but to the way in which those experiences are mediated through language, to what children are willing and able to verbalise." (Protherough in Corcoran & Evans eds., 1987, p.77) Although Protherough's argument refers mainly to secondary school students, this premise is just as relevant to those in the primary school. As teachers we model, through the discussions we practise and the activities we set, models of literary storytelling. Yet, what we model to our children, even though we are concerned with the language basics of listening, speaking, reading and writing, does not always give them the opportunity to learn how to frame, present and reflect on ideas. According to Protherough, "Telling stories about stories is a form of learned behaviour"(1987, p.77), and one that, in the past, has often meant children's stories or ideas will match the teacher's in order to give the right answer.

Therefore, in light of the assumption that children learn their language by hearing it and by being encouraged to use language models, the notion of introducing them to conventions and codes of our culture's literature, should assist them in their rhetorical development, and thus enable them to begin to be critics of the crafts of writing and narrative. In making sense and searching for meaning, children need to pay attention to more than sounds, words, phrases and sentences of their language. Their development

Rosenblatt, L. The reader, the text, the poem: The transactional theory of the literary work. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University, 1978.

⁴¹The sort of reading called deconstruction is, among other things, an exploration of the constructions of literature to determine the extent of their artificiality, how they are constructed or manufactured, and how they work to disguise their own artifice. This is based on the work of Derrida following that of Bakhtin whose stress was on multiple meanings. Deconstructive critiques are often termed post-structuralist. Derrida J. Writing and Difference. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976. Bakhtin M. Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics. Ann Arbor: Ardis Publications, 1929.

will be enhanced by acquiring a literary language which will give them the opportunity to participate in conversations about language, the writer's world view, openings, narrative form and endings. When describing this participatory kind of conversation, Chambers points out, "The teacher offers knowledge of rhetorical devices (the student learns by doing) and must know how to work conversational contributions into some kind of spontaneously organised pattern revealing the underlying movements of the response." (Chambers, 1987, p.119) Moreover, he argues "... that it is by evolving this style of conversation that enables children to see books in a different and more complete way" (Chambers, 1987, pp. 174).

Modelling strategies

Teachers, I believe, can learn much from observing writers/illustrators talk with children about their craft since they generally approach content and meaning through form and pattern. For example, the Canadian illustrator, Ian Wallace, talked with my Year Five about his role as illustrator of the picture book, Very Last First Time (1985)⁴², a tale about an Inuit girl collecting mussels from the sea floor for the first time without her mother. Wallace encouraged the children to play 'I spy' games and, as a result, through their play with ideas, they began to understand the significance of the recurring images and metaphors in both text and pictures. With his guidance, they made connections which helped them to gain deeper insights into how the story is primarily an initiation ceremony whereby the girl becomes a woman, and is thus spiritually in touch with her ancestors.

Moreover, during the hour Wallace talked with the children, he invited them to make discoveries as to why Andrews had chosen to use particular language, and why he in collaboration with Andrews had composed pictures and used colour in certain ways to achieve mood and atmosphere. All of this contributed to the overall meaning of the book. Consequently, the children's enjoyment and understanding seemed to grow as, collectively, they found and examined new meanings. In the context of the exploration, they were exposed and encouraged to use a range of vocabulary which related to linguistic and narrative structures, not only vocabulary associated with the Inuit culture. Wallace's original paintings enabled them

⁴² Andrews, J. and Wallace, I. (ill.) Very Last First Time. Vancouver: Groundwood, 1985.

to see more clearly how a particular book's actual construction and layout can affect meaning.

Whilst teachers do not always have the writers' inside knowledge of how their stories are constructed, they can become familiar with the conventions and patterns used before sharing the book, and frame questions that focus on these features. Obviously, not all writers/illustrators have the ability to interact with children like Wallace, but nevertheless when one reads or listens to various writers talking about their books, the way in which their books are constructed often becomes the focus.

What to teach

Previously in Chapters Two and Three, when presenting the cognitive and emotional opportunities offered by re-worked fairy tales, many of the conventions with which one would want children to be familiar, were mentioned in the context of the particular book being discussed. It must be stressed that the use of codes and conventions are not to be treated as analytic tools for decoding a story, regardless of the context. Rather they should be used to encourage richer responses about reading experiences. Nodelman puts it this way:

We want children to become aware of the ways in which texts communicate distinctive experiences, to understand how writers' specific choices of words, phrases, events, and so on work together to create the flavor and meanings of individual texts. Since such an awareness requires the necessary language, we should teach children that language: the words and phrases, like "image," "structure," "gap," "melo-drama," or "story pattern," that allow us to formulate and develop understanding of our reading experiences.

(Nodelman, 1992, p.215)

The re-worked fairy tales, in the experimental ways they are constructed, are an effective way of introducing children to some of the conventions of literature; how they work and what they mean. Once they are more fully aware of the literary conventions the tales contain and the way in which writers/illustrators have used them, children are in a better position to get a great deal more than those who are not aware of them. However, I would

be cautious about taking literary structuralism⁴³ too far in class as this might spoil the 'playfulness' and joy of the sharing sessions. Without this the situations could become focused on skill instruction, moving away from the notion of using literary language to give the children's conversations more meaning, more pleasure and sense of aesthetic control.

With this in mind, I found Stott, who uses a structuralist approach in his research, helpful. He believes that in enabling children to study the conventions and their uses in specific stories, we are helping them to comprehend more fully the implications of the actual words they read or hear and, as a result, give them insights of how structural patterns inform all literature. "Through the way we present stories, the questions we ask, and the activities we initiate, we are helping young readers to better understand the significance of the structures created by great story tellers, and most important, we are helping them to acquire the ability to create their own structures." (Stott, 1990, p. 228)

Summary

To create a literary environment, where the children's responses move from spontaneous sharing to critical reflection, the teacher needs to assume a new role, one which is more complex and aware. Previous methods, for example, the completion of work sheets, are no longer relevant, as much of the time spent on such tasks is needed to help children interpret their readings. However, the teacher needs to be aware of the importance of the children's initial responses since "...they are invaluable indicators of what kinds of learning needs to go on, as well as providing essential raw material for discussion in the group." (Protherough, 1987, p.92) Hence, the teacher needs to look closely at what the children say in order to judge how to guide their responses. As I was to discover, when working with my own class, one can sometimes believe that in allowing children to miss vital clues, they may fail to interpret certain aspects of the story. Yet there are many occasions when 'holding back' leaves opportunities for further refinement by the children of their own responses. If a teacher is sensitive to what the children are saying, he/she may be in a better position through repeated interactions to develop the ability to know when to intervene and when it is not appropriate.

⁴³With structuralism the authority for meaning, having earlier shifted from author to text, moved beneath the surface, to the deep structures where the meaning of the text could still be retrieved.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONTEXT

Pedagogical historical context (1960's - 1990's)

From the late sixties through to the seventies, the progressive movement in primary education encouraged the adoption of integrated curricula and general topic studies which were largely facilitated through the examination of a theme. This approach was particularly evident in the teaching of literature, one which required the teacher to select books by theme or topic, for example, animal stories and, as a result, it shifted the emphasis away from the book to the topic. However, in the mid-eighties this approach began to be discredited as a curricular innovation as many educators realised that integrated curricula tended to reduce the attention given to individual subjects. During this time in Tasmania, the Primary Language Guidelines⁴⁴, a series of six documents, were published advocating what has become popularly known as a whole language approach based on the work of Goodman and Smith in the United States⁴⁵. One consequence of this was that in a number of schools basal reading programmes were replaced by literature-based literacy programmes where speaking, listening, reading and writing were regarded as interrelated modes with the teacher's role moving towards that of facilitator and resource person. Unfortunately, some aspects of this approach tended to be misinterpreted and, hence, direct intervention by the teacher was viewed as unnecessary.

In the nineties, however, there have been repeated claims about the unsatisfactory literacy and numeracy performance of many children and, as a result, accountability has become an issue and an argument for a national curriculum. Consequently, for both political and educational reasons, many subject areas have reclaimed their distinct character and content with a focus towards the development of competences, and this shift appears to be

⁴⁴The Primary Language Guidelines are a series of six documents published between 1982 and 1985 and updated in 1991 by the Tasmanian Education Department.

⁴⁵Goodman and Smith support an "inside-out" or psycholinguistic account of the reading processes. Their models of reading demonstrate that like other modes of language, reading is an inexact, highly cognitive activity, in which readers engage actively in their attempts to gather together the significant threads. Smith, F. Understanding Reading. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1978.

supported to a degree through the National Statements and Profiles. For example, one of the Level 3 learning outcomes (3.7) of the Reading and Viewing strand of the English Profile states, "a student identifies and uses structures and features characteristic of a range of text types to construct meaning." (p.59, 1993) This learning outcome, like many others, from the Linguistic Structures and Features profile sub-strand, reflects narrative structure theory in the teaching of reading. Thus, the relationship between the teaching of literature and the teaching of reading is recognised. Explicit in a number of sub-strands are strategies to assist readers develop literary competences, for example, identifying the codes and conventions of a wide range of literature.

Over the last twenty years there has been an increasing interest in making teaching and learning more explicit. The national statements and profile can be seen as a culmination of this initiative in education. This contrasts with the workbook 'list of questions' approach to test comprehension in order to find the one right answer and, later, popular "book response activities", which have been substituted with the idea that younger children are as capable as adults of critical thinking in the literary sense. Many writers of teacher guides and support materials are now exploring and suggesting alternative and more educative teaching strategies than those used in the past. In Australia the work of Trevor Cairney (1990)⁴⁶ has been welcomed. Cairney bases his approach on the views of Bill Corcoran⁴⁷ (1987), where the focus is on the activity of the mind, rather than the product of the mind's activity. The product (or response) is only of interest because it reflects conscious engagement in the processing of the text. Taking this into account Cairney presents a sequence of careful planned strategies to encourage children to make intelligent and thoughtful responses.

⁴⁶Trevor Cairney bases his structured programme on the 3-way interaction in Other Worlds: The Endless Possibilities of Literature. Melbourne: Nelson, 1990.

⁴⁷Bill Corcoran identifies four basic types of mental activity involved in aesthetic reading: picturing and imaging; anticipating and retrospecting; engagement and construction; and valuing and evaluating. He suggests readers of all levels of reading maturity will engage in these mental activities. Corcoran in "Teachers Creating Readers" B. Corcoran and E. Evans (eds.) Readers, Texts, Teachers. Portsmouth: Boynton/Cook, 1987.

The author of this study

I have taught for twenty two years in primary schools in Australia, apart from two years in England in the late sixties. The past fourteen years have been spent at an independent, kindergarten to grade twelve girls' school where I have been the co-ordinator of grades three-six for nine years, as well as a classroom teacher, mostly in grades four and five. My interest began in children's literature when completing my Bachelor of Education degree in the mid-eighties, and this has continued to be the focus of the course work while studying for a masters degree.

Current practice

Despite the growing realisation that we need to intervene and focus on the actual text, I have sometimes continued to use literature as a 'tool' in the teaching of other subjects due to difficulties that include limitations of time, school organisation and external demands, for instance, the growth of the core curriculum. When talking with some colleagues about the teaching of literature, I found that they, too, view the role of the teacher as one who provides children with a range of literary texts for a variety of purposes. They believed that children should be given opportunities to respond creatively with the emphasis on visual and dramatic representations, and when applicable, integrate the book into other curricular areas.⁴⁸

Although this approach is important in terms of personal response, it does indicate that perhaps less attention is being given to help children develop a greater cognitive and emotional understanding of what they read through shared reflection in conversation. Some primary school teachers believe a more structured approach has its place in the secondary school where direct teacher involvement is a prime function, whereas in the primary school the teacher is required to provide time and be more actively involved in stimulating response. Yet, on occasions, some teachers, both primary and secondary at my particular school, are concerned that many children lack 'comprehension skills' in their reading. Implicit in this statement is the

⁴⁸In 1991, when designing and developing a literature curriculum as part of the course work for my master's degree, I conducted a survey to find out the views of the teachers with whom I taught. Their responses are documented in Appendix 5.

assumption that children have to be taught to comprehend using what Margaret Meek calls old pedagogy with new content⁴⁹.

Furthermore, given that in my school a 'cultural heritage' model is valued, there is the expectation that the junior school will prepare the students for the more formal methodologies of the senior school. This, at times, has produced criticism of approaches to the teaching of literature where some classroom practices have been viewed as 'trivial'. Too much emphasis was given, in critics' views, to exploiting a text so that young readers could paint, or improvise or compose music and so on. The book became a launching pad for work in other arts forms or as a basis for social science. The text itself was not sufficiently addressed and critically reading underdeveloped. Nonetheless, discussions with the secondary English teachers are most beneficial in determining expectations, in terms of the literary experiences, competences and attitudes students should acquire by the beginning of Grade Seven.

Taking into account my present classroom practice, the expectations at the senior school level and acknowledging the stated outcomes in the English National Statement and Profile, I sought to implement an eight week literature programme, based on the re-worked fairy tale in the picture book and woven into the longer novel *Wolf* (1990). Shared reflections on the texts were to be given a stronger emphasis. Content and meaning were to be explored through form and pattern. In so doing I was seeking to develop the children's interest, their expectations and the 'specific competence' as suggested by Ommundsen (1993).

Students

I teach at a small independent girls' school where there are few students for whom English is a second language. Class sizes vary but during the study

⁴⁹Meek, M. *Response-Begin Again*. Paper prepared for the Literature Commission, 3rd International Conference on the Teaching of English, Sydney, 1980. (pp 90-93) Meek suggests that 'old pedagogy' is transmission teaching where class discussions are teacher dominated in preparation for the formal essay or exam. 'New content' refers to books which are relevant to the children's lives. The emphasis is often on 'realism' or 'reality', so that contemporary issues which include racism, prejudice and feminism are discussed in context. New literary forms are admitted, for example the strip cartoon or radio play. While Meek's comments are focused on secondary school teaching it seemed to me that there were insights in her paper which are relevant to the primary program. This is especially true in a kindergarten to grade 12 school which stresses the values of the cultural heritage.

there were only fourteen girls, ten to eleven year olds, in my grade five. There was a wide range of ability in the class. However, most girls had been immersed in books from an early age, with four girls reading well above their chronological age. There were two girls who lacked confidence but were keen to participate in the unit of work. Given that the school is an independent one, many of the students came from higher socio-economic backgrounds and professional families. Children and parents showed a keen interest in a wide range of books⁵⁰.

PLAN

Purposes

The plan was based on a transactional approach with the emphasis on 'experience' and 'involvement'. According to Purvis, based on the writing of Rosenblatt, "Literature has an important place in schools as a means of bringing children to terms with their heritage and the culture that surrounds them and shapes their thoughts, as a means of developing the powers of their minds, and as a means of stimulating the imaginative transaction with what is read." (Purvis and Monson, 1984, p.18)

In planning the programme of work I drew closely on the writings of Protherough (1983, 1987), Chambers (1985), Benton and Fox (1987), Stott (1990), Cairney (1990) and Nodelman (1992), all of whom have documented ways to work with children to develop responses to narrative. It was my intention to develop an environment in which students would feel free to share their responses with the teacher and each other, and where literature is a part of group life.

Long term aims

1. The re-worked fairy tales and related books should be presented in a way that heightens the children's enjoyment, stimulates their interest, extends their emotional development and enriches their imaginations.
2. Children need to consider their readings or what they listen to by sharing in some ways with others in order to reflect critically in order to gain a fuller

⁵⁰ Parents and children in large numbers attended school book fairs. Linguistic development and literacy are highly valued.

understanding. The children should be encouraged to analyse, criticise, assess, interpret, compare, and link with their knowledge and experiences.

3. Through shared readings and participating in conversations about the stories, children should develop a knowledge of linguistic and narrative structures and how they contribute to overall meaning.

PROGRAMME

Lesson sequence

The programme of work was planned to be taken over eight weeks, with one hour each week allocated for group work in order to focus on a specific book. Another half hour each day was given over to the serial reading of the novel. Throughout the programme an afternoon was made available each week for related reading and writing activities, as well as visual or dramatic representations.

METHODOLOGY

In order to make on an objective analysis of the children's talk, I planned to tape both group and whole class conversations at least once a week. During the week, when the class was divided into two groups for their library period, I was able to tape the children in smaller groups which allowed for easier sharing of the detailed pictures. When I taped a small group or the whole class, I grouped the children closely around me. This procedure, sometimes, resulted in the children's voices becoming inaudible due to the way they were positioned. Furthermore, the situation was exacerbated by some of the girls' soft voices.

I also used the children's journal entries, where they were encouraged to make personal responses to Wolf (1990), to gauge their initial thoughts, and to make decisions about what direction further talk should take. In their journals, they were asked to describe the images or pictures which they had had in their minds' eye or inner eye while I was reading the book. This writing included expressions of their own feelings and unanswered questions. On occasions, I used other forms of their writing, for instance, Susan's story, "Cinderella Continued", and their newspaper reports at the end of Wolf (1990) to make evaluations. (Appendix, 3 & 4).

Initially it was my intention to tape all the conversations relating to the books in order to analyse the children's responses. Whilst many of the sessions were taped, the presence of a tape recorder tended to create an artificial atmosphere. I found I talked too much. Some of the more spontaneous conversations initiated by the children seemed to arise at unexpected moments, and thus the talk may have ceased if I had intervened to place a tape recorder nearby. In such situations, I recorded my observations at a more appropriate moment. Chapter Six, therefore, is documented in a journal style with excerpts of the transcripts and related comments. At the end of each week, or at the completion of a particular book, an evaluation was made in order to assess the development of the children's literary competences and to appraise my own strategies in guiding the children in their interpretive activities.

CHAPTER SIX

IMPLEMENTING THE PROGRAMME

Since I had been on leave the previous term, I decided not to tape the children's conversations⁵¹ immediately but to wait until I had re-established a rapport with them. The children's journal entries in the form of comments and questions were used to indicate their responses in Week Two, and transcripts of related tapes appeared from Week Three onwards. At the end of each week an evaluation was included to consider what the children gained from the cognitive and emotional opportunities offered by each book. Changes made to the proposed programme are included at the beginning of the week when necessary.

WEEK ONE

Snow White in New York, Fiona French (1986)

Focus:

- The relation of layout and book formatting meaning,
- The setting and context,
- Observation and discussion of the visual codes in the story,
- Consideration of some of the underlying themes, for example, jealousy.

I made the decision to introduce *Snow White in New York* (1986) on the first day of the programme because it was a book with which my class was not familiar. Furthermore, I wanted to share a re-worked tale that would delight and interest them, as well as provide an encounter which would encourage focused conversation. This book, which proved to be one of the most popular with Year Five during the programme, captured their imaginations immediately with its stylised art deco drawings and setting in the speak-easies of the prohibition era. During the first discussion, which mainly focused on setting, the children drew parallels between the forest in the traditional tale and New York city. Then, in pairs using copies of "Snow

⁵¹Please note all the children's names in this study have been changed to preserve anonymity. Nevertheless I wanted to use names not numbers in order to indicate that these are real children.

White" from the Grimms, they listed the differences and similarities that could be found in the earlier version.

Having only two copies of French's version posed a problem at times as all the children were keen to examine the book closely in order to make their own connections. From their initial observations questions arose, for example, "Why was Snow White's hair blonde, not ebony?" This, in turn, led to talk about stereotypes, and how French uses colour to create mood and atmosphere and, in particular, how she contrasts Snow White and the wicked stepmother. The significance of the blue and green colour of their respective eyes was commented upon. [The term 'stereotype' was used in the presentation of the work.]

Much time was spent examining the layout of the book, which led to talk about the positioning of the text and pictures, and how sometimes the pictures form the frame. Art deco, silhouettes, cross hatching, double page spreads, perspective and motif were terms which were mentioned in the context of the focused talk. What really excited the girls, was the meaning embedded in the changing shapes of the wicked stepmother's earrings. At first, one girl, who recently had had her ears pierced, alerted the class to the dangling corpses, which she thought signified the stepmother's anger and jealousy. The stepmother wanted Snow White dead. Together we followed the story from the stepmother's perspective, through the changing images of the earrings, from the geometric diamond shapes (her trade mark "Queen of Diamonds"), to the sword, to the corpses and, finally, to the corpses disguised by a red cherry. Moreover, some of the children felt the particular shade of dark red French uses for the cherry could also be linked to the sinister side of the stepmother. Her dark red lips, which is echoed in the red roses, contrast very sharply with the lighter red on Snow White's lips. The children were learning to read the visual codes as metaphors or symbols. They were noting the significance of 'blood red' in the story.

The following day during drama the girls were keen to create their own updated version, "Snow White on the Gold Coast", which was very much influenced by what was, then, the new television soapie, "Paradise Beach". Although the improvisations mirrored the stereotypes which they had seen on such programmes, much was gained from their talk in the planning stages, especially in the way setting, motifs and story patterns could be changed. To achieve this they returned often to French's version to see

how she had modified the traditional tale. One group had the stepmother in charge of a cosmetic company, basking in the fame of the television commercial, where she was seen each night flaunting her beauty, perhaps a Helena Rubenstein or an Estée Lauder. Snow White, the daughter of a wealthy Gold Coast entrepreneur, soon after her father's marriage to the cosmetic queen, won a beach girl competition, thus angering her stepmother. However, it was a team of life-guards who gave Snow White the protection she sought until she was poisoned by the anonymous gift of lipstick. Her admirer was a television reporter covering the beauty quest. Each group commented on the others' 'soapies' by noting how they had modified the motifs found in both French's version and the classical "Snow White".

Throughout the week the girls brought their own copies of "Snow White" to school and spent time comparing the different versions, both text and illustrations. The range, indeed, was varied from a Jacobs, illustrated by Margaret Tarrant, to the mass produced Golden Book and Disney versions. The mirror motif was used as a way to focus on the different ways language is used. Many children had never heard the earlier version where the mirror answers:

"Queen, thou art fairest here, I hold,
But Snow White over the fells,
Who with the seven dwarfs dwells,
Is fairer still a thousandfold."

but most were familiar with Dahl's and Blake's:

'From now on, Queen, you're Number Two.
'Snow White is prettier than you!.

The 'New York Mirror' in French's version gave the class a fresh way of looking at the motif and thus the opportunity to talk about vanity, a human weakness.

Due to the interest in fairy tales, generated by Snow White in New York (1986), the talk focused on how they had originated, and the differences between folk and fairy tales. After a brainstorming session, traditional fairy tale elements were painted onto a large mural across the back of the classroom as a backdrop for the display of books (Appendix 9), with one half

for re-worked tales and the other for traditional retellings. The children had access to all the books throughout the programme, and they were encouraged to include their own personal copies for class sharing. Both the French and German teachers became interested in the programme and were keen to share with the class their knowledge of the lives of Perrault and the Grimm Brothers, and began to read both versions of some of the classical fairy tales in their respective lessons.

Evaluation

By the end of the first week it was evident that the children's interest in fairy tales had been aroused. However, I tended to be overwhelmed by the depth of what was on offer in terms of content - the traditional fairy tale elements, stereotypes and story patterns. On reflection, perhaps, I was over enthusiastic with what I wanted to share. This was something of which I needed to be constantly aware during the following weeks in order for the children to make their own discoveries. It was most important to be aware that my role should be that of facilitator or guide, as advocated by Cairney. It needed to be a 'three way interaction' of text, readers and teacher. Therefore, I began to be mindful that the programme should not become an integrated topic which might change the original purpose of the programme. If this had happened, the focus on individual books may have gradually diminished.

First, I found Snow White in New York (1986) gave the children the opportunity to explore the use of setting and how it affects the story, and how the motifs become changing metaphors which extend meaning. Second, the opportunity for talk about female stereotypes arose. In terms of emotional opportunities, the children were able to talk freely about vanity and, to a lesser extent, jealousy. These ten and eleven year old girls had reached a stage where their appearance was of increasing importance to them. Therefore, talk about the relevance of the earrings was one particular way for them to negotiate meaning and was indicative of the deeper insights that they had gained from French's re-working of the traditional version of "Snow White". They were learning to interpret explicit visual codes. Given that the book implies a reader who is familiar with the prohibition era of the thirties, it was necessary for me to describe accurately life in the larger cities of United States at that time. Snow White in New

York (1986) constantly appeared on the girls' desks, and one particular girl bought her own copy.

WEEK TWO

Wolf, Gillian Cross (1990)

Focus:

- Discussion of the role of "Little Red Riding Hood" in relation to the plot and characters,
- The power of the motifs,
- Cassy's emotions and feelings in response to the events of the story, "What are her inner struggles and needs?"

I had planned to commence reading the novel Wolf (1990) half way through the programme, but since the children were keen to start a new novel, given that it was the beginning of term, I decided to bring it forward. One of the chief purposes for reading this novel by Gillian Cross was to let the children see and understand the innovative way a fairy tale, like "Little Red Riding Hood", can be woven into a longer story to extend meaning. Furthermore I wanted to take advantage of the emotional opportunities it offers as described in Chapter Three. Nonetheless, I was a little apprehensive about reading Wolf (1990) to Year Five, given the subject matter. Would these younger children understand it and be able to handle the concept of terrorism? I need not have worried since they were drawn into it right from the first page and were anxious to hear each new chapter. Nonetheless, the possibility of objections by some parents was always a concern.

Fiona was quick to observe the 'Little Red Riding Hood' element at the end of the first chapter (her own initiation) and, then, Susan queried the mother's name, Goldie, and was able to make the connection with "Goldilocks". The talk, emanating from the second chapter, was primarily about the squat and, subsequently, the parallels to the fairy tale began to emerge, for example, how Goldie uses someone else's house illegally, like Goldilocks entering the Three Bears' house uninvited. The children were fascinated with the lifestyle the squat presented, which is not surprising given their middle class backgrounds. As Annie wrote in her journal,

I kept imagining waking upon a cold hard floor with
a raincoat as a pillow and hearing the frying of
toast and the sizzling of bacon. (Annie, Appendix 3.)

After the third chapter the squat was still on the children's minds. For instance, when they recorded what they had pictured in their 'inner eye' during the reading, fish and chips, knives and forks (or the lack of them) and hard floors figured prominently. They were still a prominent feature of some of the collages⁵², which the children created, after the final reading.

Kim summed up the first three chapters well when she wrote:

I think in some sence [Sic] The Wolf is very much like
grinny, suspencefull [Sic] and you have to concerntrate [Sic] to
understand. The Wolf has lots and lots of mayby's [Sic]
and some confusing bits. (Kim, Appendix 3)

The 'confusing bits' offered by Cross challenged the children to think more deeply about what the story is about. Kim compared Wolf (1990) with Grinny (1973), a tense science fiction book, which I had read to the class at the beginning of the year. Jenny, like the others, wanted to know why Goldie did not conform to the stereotypical mother, as well as how and why the yellow lump became placed in the grandmother's bag? (Appendix 3.) The origin of the yellow lump was speculated upon frequently during the early chapters, and "Who put it in the bag?" was still being discussed much later (Transcript 11, lines 11 - 34). This was a time when the sharing of responses became more rigorous. At the end of each chapter the children were given the opportunity to make comments or pose their own questions as a basis for their talk. The following journal entries are indicative of the way they were thinking after the first three chapters.

The phone box scene was glued in my mind, the dark
grey sky above and the cold wind outside. When she
stepped out of the phone box I amagened [Sic] the three
breaths of air she took. (Annie, Appendix 3)

⁵²The collage is a visual response suggested by Geoff Fox where children, ideally in pairs, develop images from the 'mind's eye' to create a work which will extend the text. Children are encouraged to add words or phrases from the text to make a statement about their work. (Geoff Fox, in a paper prepared for the 2nd Joint National Conference of the Australian Reading Association and the Association for the Teaching of English, Hobart, September, 1992)

The thing that kept popping into my mind was that yellow stuff, that it had something to do with the original story of Red Riding Hood. (Prue, Appendix 3)

Evaluation

My doubts about the suitability of Wolf (1990), so far, had proved groundless. Moreover, the difficulties I had anticipated that the children might experience, such as understanding the symbolic nature of "Little Red Riding Hood", did not occur. I, wrongly, made the assumption when planning the programme, that the children would need to experience a number of shorter re-worked fairy tales with powerful symbolic symbols before they would be ready for a longer novel, such as Wolf (1990). However, as I explained earlier, although Wolf (1990) differs significantly from the other re-workings in this study, the fairy tale is woven explicitly into the story. The difficulty lies in the children learning to make the transition from explicit motifs to those embedded implicitly in the text, for example, the wolf presented in different guises. They needed to move on from their stereotypical image of wolf-lore.

At the planning stage I was working on the notion of moving from simple to complex, whereas I should have had in mind, regardless of the complexity of the story, the notion of moving from stories with explicit metafictional devices to those with more implicit ones. One of my purposes should have been to help the children to become experienced in noticing how the symbolic motifs point to links between the plot and theme, whether they be in the pictures or the text. For example, the significance of the yellow aconite in the dream is an implicit signal that all is not well.

Wolf (1990), although multi-layered, is very explicit in its use of the 'Little Red Riding Hood' journey motif and related symbols to drive the plot forward, one which is deceptively simple. It is the way Cross reshapes this well known fairy tale and uses its symbolism to provide the depth of meaning, that makes it so complex. Yet, at the same time, it is the fairy tale which provides the framework for the children to see the parallels. Once my class understood the significance of the dream sequences, most of them were able to make connections, many of which were discussed in order to look below the surface features of the story. For instance, at the beginning,

parallels were soon made with the pine forest and the city of London, with references made to the setting of Snow White in New York (1986). Hence, the children were led to speculate about the dangers of a large city, not unlike the fairy tale forest, places which, in fiction and reality, are viewed as unsafe places for a young girl on her own. This made the significance of Cassy's blue mac and basket of food more potent in terms of what would happen next.

The Frog Prince Continued (1991)

Jon Scieszka & Steve Johnson

Focus:

- The layout and formatting of the book and how they can affect meaning,
- Examination of the way stories begin and end,
- Discussion of male and female roles,
- How Scieszka draws on other fairy tales.

During the same week, I shared with the children, The Frog Prince Continued (1991), a picture book which none of them had encountered before, but found to be extremely humorous. At the beginning we discussed, in detail, the prelims which include the cover, a book within a book, the palette Johnson uses in the paintings, as well as the endpapers and the use of parchment like paper. I wanted them to be aware of the way they had been used to create mood and atmosphere, in that the very fabric of the book was part of the fiction.

Furthermore, the way Scieszka and Johnson make references to other fairy tales, gave me the opportunity to introduce the term 'intertextuality', and how many narrative artists of re-worked fairy tales inter-weave or draw upon other tales. At this point Fiona remembered the Ahlbergs' The Jolly Postman or Other People's Letters (1986), one with which the children were already familiar. They enjoyed re-visiting it and noted with delight the intertextual links and allusions in a fresh way. The following day I was surprised and impressed when Susan wrote her own story, "Cinderella Continued", where the paths of Cinderella, Snow White and Red Riding Hood cross.

The following excerpt is when Cinderella meets Snow White:

She opened the gate and followed the yellow brick path
up to the cottage.
She knocked and waited. The door was opened by a pretty
young girl with hair as black as ebony.
"Hello who are you?" she asked.
Cinderella answered, "My name is Cinderella Charming and
I was told by some little men that I could find food and
lodging here."
"Oh that would have been the dwarfs," laughed Snow
White.

(Complete story, Appendix 4)

From this short excerpt it is evident that Susan was using idioms learned from previous reading encounters within the genre, for example, 'the yellow brick path', 'food and lodging' and 'hair as black as ebony'. She demonstrated her ability to model her story on The Frog Prince Continued (1991) in her own unique way. Although Susan may not have understood the actual term 'intertextuality', she had developed the literary competence to make the intertextual links and allusions.

The children were able to focus on stereotypes, as they had previously done, when examining Snow White in New York (1986), but in a more overt way. Scieszka's and Johnson's 'frog-like' royal family were compared with the princes and princesses in traditional fairy tales. I, then, posed the question, "How did this prince and princess differ from those in traditional versions?" The children were able to make the connection with the way male and female roles are sometimes portrayed in contemporary stories and on television. Of course, it didn't take long before the current marriage problems of some members of the current British royal family arose. Not even royalty have perfect marriages!

The structure of the book in the way it begins and ends - "And they lived happily ever after" "And they hopped off happily ever after"- provided an appropriate opportunity for the class to talk about endings in romantic or sentimental stories. This, in turn, led to more focused talk on how such stories are not always a reflection of real life. Rather they focus on how some writers and, perhaps, some readers wish life to be. This proved to be an ideal time to re-look at the ending of Snow White in New York (1986) to question what appeared on the surface to be the perfect ending. I considered

it an appropriate time to draw the children's attention to the small silhouette of the stepmother being apprehended by the police. We, then, returned to the page where she is described as, 'Queen of the Underworld'. This was an opportunity to reconsider the implication of such a title, for instance, the influence some of her very powerful friends might exert. Perhaps they owed her favours or could be bribed. There was one particular girl in the class, a watcher of late night television, who appeared to have a greater knowledge of the gangster movie genre and, therefore, was able to make the connection. The discussion of alternative endings was indicative of how the story could be read on many levels.

Evaluation

After sharing The Frog Prince Continued (1991) the children's awareness of intertextuality was certainly heightened. Furthermore, they delighted in reading Susan's story, "Cinderella Continued". Both these stories helped them to notice how writers draw on other stories. Later that week, when Beth brought to school her video of Dahl's and Blake's Revolting Rhymes (1982), the class had further opportunities to view and listen to how allusions to fairy tales and nursery rhymes can be made. Throughout the term the children brought to my attention references to other stories in their own reading and clues left by the illustrators in the pictures. They had taken on board the idea of 'I spy' with enthusiasm. Their concept of both intertextuality and interpictureoriality was developing well.

However, I knew that it was necessary to move the conversation from spontaneous sharing to a situation where the children's responses could be sharpened and refined in order to gain further insights. At times, I found this to be incredibly difficult because, once I pushed for more rigour, the talk had a tendency to become teacher dominated. Nonetheless, it was encouraging to observe the way in which the class was keen to talk about the books. Given that there were only fourteen girls, creating opportunities for talk was considerably easier than it would have been with a larger class. They were becoming attentive to how symbolic motifs are used in a more reflexive style of narrative, one which allows for increased exploration of issues and poses more thought-provoking questions.

WEEK THREE

Baba Yaga (1988)

A Russian folk tale retold by Margaret Yatsevitch

Hansel and Gretel (1981) Anthony Browne

Focus:

- An awareness of the journey motif (child alone),
- The similarities and differences between retold and re-worked tales,
- The incongruities between text and pictures in Browne's version,
- The recurring images and how they contribute to meaning in Hansel and Gretel (1981),
- The themes of betrayal and loyalty.

The decision to use Baba Yaga (1988), one which had been planned at the beginning of the programme, was influenced by the availability of a 'Big Book', a set of six smaller ones and an audio tape. I wanted the children to become familiar with an aesthetically pleasing traditional retelling. The book was a good example of a 'child alone' story containing typical folk tale elements and rich rhythmic language. Baba Yaga (1988) was read to the class at the beginning of the week, followed by two of the suggested activities from Bookshelf Stage Six Activity Book (1988). At first, the girls in pairs, drew story maps (Appendix 5) in order to discuss the sequence of events and see explicitly its cyclical nature of the 'journey'. The following day the children, in the same pairs, were given an activity sheet, where they had to find folk hero elements from Baba Yaga (1988) and list examples. The following transcript is of the first taped interview, one which was very stilted, due to the fact that Zoe and Jessica were conscious of being taped, and this was exacerbated by the closed nature of the questions set out on the activity sheet. (Appendix 6)

1. Jessica: [Has the sheet to guide her.] Does Katrina meet those who have enchanted powers?
2. Zoe: She meets the witch and the cat.
3. Jessica: Does Katrina have companions that are not always human?
5. Zoe: Yes, the dog, the cat and the gate.
6. Jessica: Does Katrina get rescued or win the love of a b..... man?
7. Zoe: No.
8. Jessica: Does Katrina make a trip to or confront the dark world of evil forces?
9. Zoe: Yes she confronts evil forces.

10. Teacher: Give us an example Zoe.
11. Zoe: Oh the witch.
12. Jessica: Does she battle strange creatures?
13. Zoe: No.
14. Teacher: Although there is Bert.....
15. Children: [Children help with pronunciation] Kosshch Bez Smertnyi. She sorts of battles him.
16. Jessica: Does she win out against evil in the end?
17. Zoe: Yes, because of the witch.
18. Jessica: Does she receive a honour of some kind?
19. Zoe: No.
20. Jessica: Does she prove that pain and sorrow must come before joy?
21. Zoe: Yes.
22. Teacher: How Zoe?
23. Annie: [Tape inaudible] Well she had all those terrible things happen to her.

In line 22, where I intervened, the first real opportunity for the girls to begin to reflect on the cause of the pain and sorrow became apparent. At this point, the class joined in and the father's ineffectual role was discussed. Prue referred to him as a wimp. I invited other girls to apply the same questions to other familiar folk tales but the outcome was similar, because the questions did not invite further talk. Nonetheless, the activity reinforced their knowledge of the folk hero elements. A week later from repeated read-alongs with the tape, I was delighted to hear Annie, Prue and Beth chant:

Baba Yaga is a witch,
In a stupa of bronze she does fly.
She guides as she rides
With a pestle of oak,
And a broom sweeps her tracks
from the sky.

(Yatsevitch Phinney, 1988)

They were enjoying the sound of words, such as, 'Baba Yaga' and the rhythmic pattern of the rhyme, both of which they could easily memorise. These same girls spent much time examining the decorated borders of the illustrations and text, and commented on how the motifs in the borders echo what is in the story. For example, they noted how a small picture in one border provides a window for what is happening outside the witch's hut. The interior of the hut was the central focus of the particular page. The explicit nature of the visual narrative gave the girls opportunities to predict outcomes as well as extend the meaning of the traditional retelling.

The tape and multiple copies proved to be a bonus in that it allowed them to participate in conversation in a shared situation.

Mid-week, I took advantage of the library period (one hour), when the class was halved, to share Anthony Browne's Hansel and Gretel (1981), another 'child alone' or 'journey' story. However, before commencing the reading, I returned to Browne's The Tunnel (1989), which we had looked at closely earlier in the year. It was an ideal introduction to the notion of intertextuality as it was one of his books with which the class was familiar. I had found it useful for story writing because it gives children opportunities to create stories within a story. For example, when Rose and Jack crawl through the tunnel into the frightening forest with its allusions to fairy tales, children can write in unlimited ways what causes Jack to turn into stone.

I thought by alerting the children to Browne's use of the colour red and the way it catches your eye in The Tunnel (1989), that they might note the similarities and the explicit use of recurring motifs (lines 12, 24, 30, 32, 34, 53-55) in Hansel and Gretel (1981). Kylie in line 40, immediately observed how similar the forests are in each book. I, also, reminded them of how story patterns and types were the focus of our reading and talk the previous week.

1. Teacher: Remember last week we had The Frog Prince Continued and we talked about transformation tales, when different characters would change into something else and one night for homework you made lists. Can you remember any of them?
2. Susan: The Six swans.
3. Beth: Jorinda and Joringel
4. Jane: Cinderella.
5. Zoe: Puss in Boots. The lion changes into a mouse.
6. Teacher: We can't really call "Baba Yaga" a transformation tale?
7. Jane: You can the comb changes into the trees
8. Kylie: The rag changes into the lake. [Tape inaudible]
9. Teacher: Because Katrina [Baba Yaga] goes on a journey we could call it a journey tale. Today I want to show you Anthony Browne's Hansel and Gretel because this is a journey tale as well. This retelling, in the text, is the Grimms' version. The illustrations are very different. I want you to look out for things which might repeat.
10. Beth: It's sort of modern. I've read it before.
11. Teacher: It is isn't it. We'll talk about the pictures as we go. The cover. [Holds up to compare The Tunnel.] We spent a long time on this book earlier in the year. What colour does Anthony Browne use to catch your eye?
12. Jane: Red, her coat ...from Red Riding Hood.
13. Teacher: [Turns to title page] There's no red here but what clues does Browne give you about the story? What do you see?
14. Zoe: The cage ...a bird.

15. Teacher: I want you to see if you can notice these motifs when you look at the pictures. [Reads first page.] There is a famine in the land. Do you think there is a famine in the picture? What does a famine mean?
16. Zoe: No food things won't grow.
17. Teacher: How could you interpret a famine in a modern day setting? What
18. Jane: The dad hasn't got any work. He's probably looking for a job in the paper.
19. Kim: The boy is looking down[inaudible]
20. Teacher: What clues in this picture make you think that things aren't going too well for this family?
21. Kylie: Chipped things....[tape inaudible]
22. Beth: They look really sad.
23. Kim: The table cloth is bare and the wallpaper is coming off.
24. Zoe: The ball's red.
25. Teacher: Yes so it is. What do you notice near the ball?
26. Kim: Look Mrs. Bennett it's a doll just like Gretel.

In lines 1-10, I moved the children from the concept of a transformation tale, The Frog Prince Continued (1991) to that of a journey, which is the key element in Baba Yaga (1988). However, as Jane quickly reminded me, there are also transformations in Baba Yaga (1988) (line 7). As previously mentioned, The Tunnel (1989) proved to be an effective way of introducing the group to their first reading of Hansel and Gretel (1981), since they had already experienced the way in which Browne creates several layers of meaning in his pictures. These are often in the guise of subtle images that provide signals of what is happening or hint at what is to come. They drew the children's attention to what can be explored.

27. Teacher: Yes, I'll turn over now. [Reads book p.2]
28. Kylie: They might be poor because she spends all her money on make-up.
29. Teacher: She obviously likes making herself beautiful.
30. Kim: She's got a string of pearls. [Children try listing all the things on the dressing table including red lipsticks.]
32. Zoe: You can see her in bed. [Tape inaudible.]
33. Teacher: I wonder why Anthony Browne shows views through the mirror?
27. Kylie: He wants to show how poor they are.
28. Kim: Like so he can show you all the things. You sort of get the impression why they're for. You can still see them in the mirror.
29. Teacher: Not only can you see the children, you can also see them closer facing each other. Does it say they were in the same room?
30. Children: No ... Yes. [Children try to decide if there is a wall or not, talk scrambled]
31. Teacher: [Reads next text p.3] What do you notice on this page?
32. Zoe: Her shoes.
33. Teacher: Why is that Zoe?
34. Zoe: They're very bright red.
35. Jane: Another mirror, its on the door.
36. Teacher: I wonder how many mirrors? [Tape becomes inaudible for a few minutes.]
37. Kylie: It's got a hand on the bottom of the tree trunk.
[She refers to the forest in The Tunnel, compares it to Full Plate p.4.]
38. Jane: She's got a cigarette and she's smoking it. I thought they were supposed to be poor.
39. Kylie: She's wearing high-heeled boots!

40. Teacher: Zoe what's the same as the shoes that catches your eye?
41. Zoe: Oh the red coat, Gretel's
42. Kim: And the toadstools too.
- [Children try to decide whether it is a cat or a bird on the chimney. Teacher reads book pp. 5,6 and 7]
43. Teacher: I want you to look at the door on both these pages. Tell me what you notice.
44. Kylie: There's a little full moon on the last page and then there is a really big one on this one. Are they gloves on the line?
45. Kim: No, they're power lines.
46. Teacher: I wonder why the light is on. What's happening?
47. Jane: I know he's looking at the pebbles. He can't get out because the stepmother has locked the door.
48. Susan: Hans is behind bars, they are just like the ones we did for the convicts.
49. Teacher: That's right Susan, let's look at this page. [A few minutes is spent looking at the different bar shapes on the preceding pages] Even the trees behind the house look like metallic bars. [Teacher reads text, p.8]
50. Zoe: It's a pet bird, it's not a cat. [inaudible talk]
51. Teacher: [Reads text, p.9] What colour do you notice again?
52. Susan: The mushrooms, no toadstools.....
53. Children: The red dress, the lollies on the gingerbread house.
54. Teacher: Look at Gretel's red coat and then see how the toadstools form a path. They direct your eyes towards the house. [Reads text p.10]
55. Unidentified voice: The witch is wearing a red brooch.
[Teacher reads text pp 10,11]
56. Kylie: There's the cage. The tree trunks are forming bars.
[Further talk inaudible, teacher reads text p.12. Children examine images on Full Plate12. Remainder of book is read]
57. Kim: Mrs. Bennett all the house is very bright.
58. Kylie: But inside the house is all dark.
59. Jane: All the trees have gone.
60. Teacher: What does it mean now that the house is light?
61. Susan: They were all unhappy before and now they're happy.
62. Teacher: It said the stepmother had died. Who had also died in the story?
63. Beth: The witch I think she was the witch. [Further talk inaudible]
64. Teacher: What sort of illustrations would you expect in a "Hansel and Gretel" story?
65. Kylie: Sort of more older.
66. Susan: Older but simpler.
67. Teacher: Simpler, how do you mean?
68. Susan: Well there aren't all the extra bits even though they're sort of got lots of stuff.
- [Session finishes comparing different versions from display.]

In their first reading, the group quickly noticed the changing images of the bars in the furniture and the cages (lines 49, 56) and the use of the colour red, but chiefly in response to my questions. While Susan and Zoe were talking to each other, their tentative responses slowly became more critical. They examined the pictures more closely and began to discriminate between the ducks and birds. Unfortunately this was not recorded, as indicated in line 50, because the tape was inaudible due to the way the girls were looking downwards at the pictures. They began to discuss the significance of the bird

and, as a result, presented me with the opportunity to develop further talk about the bird motif. In a later session we were able to focus on the role of the pet bird and its betrayal, as well as the counterpoint of the duck taking Hansel and Gretel across the river to safety.

Evaluation

The 'first reading' comments during the half hour period, as indicated on the transcript, were what could be reasonably expected in the time allocated. Because the girls were keen to continue with Wolf (1990), we did not return to explore the issues in more depth until much later. Nevertheless, some girls did choose to read Hansel and Gretel (1981) during silent sustained reading. On reflection, I should have taken greater advantage of the girls' interest in the stepmother's dressing table with its assorted range of cosmetics - her shoes, fake fur coat and cigarette - all aspects of her appearance. By taking the children's lead, I may have been able to direct the talk to the stepmother's lack of regard for Hansel and Gretel and their father's betrayal much earlier. For example, no-one noticed Hansel's odd socks, a visual counterpoint to the stepmother's appearance. During the programme, I discovered it was much easier to discuss family relationships in a humorous story like, The Frog Prince Continued (1991), as a distance is created by the 'froggy' setting and characters. Nonetheless, I made the decision to return to Hansel and Gretel (1981) to explore the emotional opportunities later, beginning with the stepmother's appearance.

After examining the structure of my questions in the above transcript, I found that in my effort to make them open-ended, for example (line 31), "What do you notice on this page?" I sometimes failed to follow them through with a clear focus in order to sharpen the children's responses. At the time, I was conscious of the talk being taped, and that I had only allowed thirty minutes for each group to complete the first reading. I felt that some of the initial purposes, for example, focusing on the theme of jealousy, were not being achieved fully due to limited time.

However, it was pleasing to observe the children returning to The Tunnel (1989) to re-look at the allusions to "Red Riding Hood" and "Hansel and Gretel" in Rose's bedroom, and compare the frightening images of evil creatures and witches, many of which are similar in both books. On reflection, I expected too much after the first shared reading of Hansel and

Gretel (1981). Despite this perceived weakness, many of the children were beginning to develop the literary competence of reading visual codes by noting the significance of detail in the setting and characters.

WEEKS FOUR AND FIVE

The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales (1992)

The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs! (1989)

Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith

Focus:

- Awareness and appreciation of parody and pastiche,
- The roles of author, narrator, illustrator and publisher,
- The demands of the surrealist pictures,
- Point of view and perspective.

The class, initially, had been introduced to The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales (1992) at the beginning of the year when Jane first brought her copy to school and, whilst I enjoyed sharing some of the jokes with the children, I tended to dismiss the book as 'good fun' without spending time to see what the book really had to offer. It is not a book to read quickly. This time I planned to give the children ample time to read it at their own leisure. With two copies, the school's and Jane's, I was able to keep both circulating in the early weeks of the programme and, as a result, nearly every girl except one, had become familiar with the book before we began a more critical reading/viewing.

As I have already discussed in Chapter Two, Scieszka and Smith seem to be questioning the whole nature of what a book is, with the use of metafictional features: 'boundary - breaking', 'excess' and 'indeterminacy'. Furthermore, given the way that The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales (1992) has been constructed, the children are invited to focus, not only on the stories, but on the cover, endpapers, title page and dedication, as well as publishing details to which Jack the narrator draws the readers' attention. In order for the children to see the book easily, I took one group at a time, with eight girls in Group 1 and six in Group 2. However, it was not my intention to complete the whole book in one half hour session, but rather to keep returning to individual stories throughout the two

weeks. Although Annie, at times, tended to dominate the talk, it was her enthusiasm and interest which often drove the talk forward.

I began with Group 1.

1. Teacher: You all know this book as it has been on the display for quite a while. Most of you have looked at it? What does the cover tell you?
2. Annie: Funny kinds of fairy tales?
3. Mary: The name says stupid, so they might be fairly stupid.
4. Teacher: What else on the cover tells you what the book might be about?
5. Fiona: The Stinky Cheese Man? (Other inaudible comments)
6. Teacher: Looking down the left hand side, it is like a border isn't it.....or a wide margin?
7. Gina: They sort of tell you what is going to be in the book, don't they?
8. Teacher: Yes it forms a border or a margin. Looking at these little pictures, they are quite small. What indications are there to tell you what
9. Annie: That one could be Cinderella.
10. Teacher: Tell me how many stories do you think there are?
11. Fiona: Seven stories....gosh the number seven.
12. Teacher: What story do you think The Stinky Cheese Man came from?
14. Teacher: Did you already know that?
15. Annie: No I just did then.
16. Teacher: There is so much to look at on the front isn't there? The title takes up nearly the whole cover. Is that normally the case?
17. Mary: No... some words are very big like stinky, fairly and stupid.
18. Teacher: Then you've got the stories listed here: a table of contents on the front. Is that normal?
19. [inaudible responses]
20. [Fiona reads the list from the cover.]
21. Teacher: Can you link one of these pictures here with one of the pictures down the side?
22. [Group takes time to match up story titles with the small pictures. [Tape in audible]
23. Teacher: Here we have the endpapers. What atmosphere or feeling are they creating for you?
24. Mary: Very smooth and wavy.
25. Teacher: mm mm waves.
26. Annie: The front cover has lots of dull colours but these are really light.
27. Teacher: Yes the cover has earthy colours but these are really light. What kind of waves are they?
28. Annie: Like dreams
29. Teacher: Let's look at the back endpapers.
30. Prue: They don't go all the way across do they?
31. [Inaudible discussion as the end papers are examined. Jessica and Annie read aloud the information on the inside flap of the dust jacket. "New improve ...10complete stories25 ...lavish paintings ... Brand X". Children all laugh, somebody says home brand.]
32. Teacher: We'll leave the prelims now. We've looked at the cover, endpapers, the advertising. He's an interesting little fellow. Who's he?
33. Helen: I know him; he's the narrator.
34. Teacher: What does he do?
35. Helen: He tells the story and if something is wrong, he tells them what to do. His name is Jack. He's in "Jack's Bean Problem". [inaudible talk]
38. Annie: No its meant for them ... in the book.
39. Fiona: [reads first page of Little Red Hen] ...to see who will be the narrator.
41. Teacher: Who is the author of the book? We have talked about him before.
42. Helen: Jon Scieszka and Jon Smith

43. Teacher: What does Lane Smith do?
44. Helen: Lane Smith is the publisher. [Somebody interjects with illustrator.]
45. Teacher: Who is the publisher? Tell me what do you think he does?
46. Mary: [refers to book] Viking. [Children make suggestions which are inaudible.]
47. Teacher: They make, print, the books, and the editor makes a lot of the decisions on how it will look. Jon Scieszka would have lot of discussion with them and Lane Smith on the layout, size, print. I wonder what they would have thought with an endpaper like this with a little argument in the front.
48. Mary: I think they would say he is clever.
49. Prue: They probably wouldn't be able to stop laughing. Who's this crazy guy?
50. Teacher: Well what normally comes after the title page?
51. [inaudible, somebody says dedication.]
52. Jessica: It's upside down. [Mary reads it from Jane's copy.]
53. Mary: That's Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith. Jane could put her own name on it, personal.
55. Teacher: Helen would you like to read the dedication page. Look there's Jill up the top of the hill.
56. Helen: He's holding up the whole page. [Starts to read] "I know I know ..."
57. Annie: He does lots of mad things, doesn't he?
58. Helen: Jack lives up the hill, F. T. Forest. [Jessica reads introduction.]
59. Teacher: Where do you normally see a warning like that?
60. Unidentified voices: medicine bottles, on smoking, spray cans.
61. Teacher: What do you think of Jack?
62. [unidentifiable voices] Neat, funny, joking - joking.

In lines 1 -22, the layout of the cover was discussed. The children were asked to match the subtitles with the column of pictures down the right hand side. This was something they found quite demanding as they were not familiar with all the stories and, perhaps, this demonstrated a superficial browsing prior to the group sharing. It was becoming obvious to the children that Scieszka and Smith were playing games with readers right from the beginning. The children's responses on the tape were inaudible at this point because they had their heads down in a huddle scanning the cover. Prue was obviously aware of the unconventional nature of the book when I asked her what the publisher might initially think of it, because she replied, (line 49), "They probably wouldn't be able to stop laughing. Who's this crazy guy?"

I particularly liked Mary's comment (line 24) when she described the pattern on the endpapers as smooth and wavy, a comment which we came back to at a later time. It was decided that the waves might indicate how 'bent' the tales are, although Annie did comment that they were like dreams (line 28). Furthermore, she used the term 'dull' when describing the colours on the cover in contrast to the light wavy pattern on the endpapers. This was something she and Helen both commented on again when we looked at "The Hair and the Rabbit" another story in the book. Scieszka and Smith, I suspect, are indicating to their readers that traditional tales are to be 'bent' or

reversed in some way in order to be reflexive. For instance, the ugly duckling stays ugly and is not a transformation tale.

It soon became evident that Annie had spent more time than the others examining the whole book, not just browsing and, thus, was more observant. For example, she said (line 40), "There's a big conversation, they're fighting to see who will be the narrator." She led the others to focus on Jack, the narrator, and then I was able to direct the talk to include the roles of author and illustrator. At this point Helen's confusion about the illustrator, Lane Smith surfaced (line 44), a signal which led me to explain the role of the publisher. As adults, we often take for granted that older children will have internalised all these concepts(conventions?).

As Mary suggests, in line 53, I did ask Jane later to write her name in the space provided. She even stood on her head! Such a personal invitation from Scieszka and Smith to sign their book implies an 'active' reader who wants to play their kind of game, and indicates the reflexive nature of the book. The children voiced their initial understanding when they described Jack as, "neat, funny, joking - joking" (line 62), implying the tales might be stupid but Jack is not.

Later that week we shared "The Princess and the Bowling Ball" which Annie reported to be excellent. Again, she had been observant as she knew that there were twenty four mattresses. This was an example of the 'sheer excess' which can break the stability of the traditional story on which it is based. The talk, then, moved to the underlying theme of the story, the prince's honesty.

17. Teacher: Were there any times when you felt Jack was speaking directly to you?
18. Annie: Not really but just at the end when he said "thoughnot completely honestly .
19. Teacher: What was he trying to say to you?
20. Annie: That's all, fairy tales don't always tell the truth.
21. Teacher: What was he telling you about the prince?
22. Annie: He lies.
23. Teacher: What do we usually think about kings and queens and princes and princesses?
24. Annie: They are always honest.
25. Teacher: Take a close look at the layout - text one page, illustration the other. What particularly takes your eye?
26. Helen: The picture takes up the whole page.
27. Teacher: Anything else?
28. Mary: There are curtains on the stage, a kind of framing.
29. Teacher: Yes indeed. What else on the text page?

30. Prue: The printed name is in blue oh wait it is "Once upon a time" too.
31. Teacher: When does it pick up that colour again?
[Two or three children say "The end" and then check out the other stories to see how they are colour coded. This leads to a discussion of colour coding and print size.]
32. Annie: It gets bigger and smaller. The introduction is 14 , this is 16. [Children flip through book naming font size until they get to "Jack's Story".]
33. Annie: I'll show you Jack's story.
34. Gina: In one of the stories it goes into newspaper.
35. Annie: I'll show you "Jack and the Bean Story". It goes over the same thing over and over again. [The children are puzzled.]
37. Annie: There's this bit here, then it's exactly the same story line.

In line 17, I asked the children when did they think Scieszka (I should have said Jack the narrator) is speaking directly to them. It was Annie (lines 18-24) who noticed "though ...not completely honestly", and hence I was able to direct her to consider our expectations of royalty in respect to honesty. Next, in lines 25-37, the children were directed to focus on the composition of the pictures which included the framing and the colour coding of the title, beginning and ending. The group spent time going from story to story comparing colours and font sizes except Gina, who at that time was not familiar with 'font' sizes. The others understood this term and related numbering from their use of computers. Gina, in order to participate in the conversation, indicated her understanding by making the analogy with the smaller print found in newspapers when she said, "In one of the stories it goes into newspaper." (line 34)

My favourite story in the book, "The Hair and the Rabbit", was one with which the group appeared to have overlooked in their first readings, or found it to be too demanding because of its lack of closure. No-one became aware of the visual/verbal pun in the title and illustration, or had really thought how it differed from the original fable. Although many of the children seemed to know an earlier version, as indicated by Mary in line 60.

47. Mary: The hair coming out of the hare's head.
48. Annie: All the pictures are kind of all dull....they're not bright and colourful like .
49. Teacher: Why is it different?
50. Helen: They're stupid tales. I mean it would look funny in bright colours.
51. Annie: It just feels right.
52. Teacher: Do you like the pictures?
53. Annie: Yes.
54. Teacher: What do you like most about the funny characters?
55. Annie: But also the cover is really dull and if the pictures inside were really bright it wouldn't be right because the cover tells you about what is inside.
56. Prue: The tortoise is wearing a hat.
57. Teacher: Looks human.
58. Annie: That clock . [She points to one on front cover. Tape becomes inaudible while the group match all the stories with the pictures on the front cover.]

59. Teacher: This is from an Aesop fable, one you all know. Do you know the story Mary?
60. Mary: The hare challenges the tortoise to a race and the hare thinks he could win by heaps and so he stops at trees and has a sleep and things and at the end the tortoise beats him.
61. Teacher: Why did the tortoise beat him?
62. Mary: The hare thought that because he was so fast that he could stop on the way.
63. Teacher: He underestimated the tortoise.
64. Annie: Comes in between, the one that's all the way through it.
65. Teacher: These stories are so different - yet ...
66. Annie: Jack always says in one of the stories that all the stories are supposed to start with "Once upon a time"
67. Teacher: He tells you that.
68. Annie: He tells the giant.
[Teacher begins to read "The Hair and the Rabbit"]
69. Teacher: Is there normally a rabbit in the story?
70. Unidentifiable voices: No a hare.
71. Teacher: [Points to title] Oh what spelling do we have up here?
73. Jessica: Oh hair in hair that you grow.
74. Annie: Our hair.
75. Teacher [Continues to read story] "On your mark. Get set Grow!" [Children laugh on the word 'grow']
76. Teacher: Why would he say grow? [More laughter]
77. Helen: Because the hare had to grow his hair. [The story is continued.]
78. Helen: The hair is coming out from the other side of the head. Then at the bottom of the next pages. It says knot as in knot of your hair. nyah, nyah. [The children joined in chanting nyah]
79. Teacher: How about Mary, would you read the last page?
80. Mary: Tortoise ran. Rabbit grew. Tortoise ran.
81. Teacher: The story like the hair goes on and on and on and on.
82. Fiona: Because they haven't finished yet. At the start it's got the brown and at the end as well.
83. Teacher: I love the knot here.
84. Jessica: The tortoise's watches are all telling different times.
85. Teacher: Perhaps you could read the times Jessica. [She has some difficulty reading them and the others help her.]
86. Teacher: Is that a normal sort of picture? It reminds me of the sort of pictures you were doing for your lockers. They were surrealist pictures too. They look real in lots of ways but they are too real and we have unusual things positioned. You don't normally see a big fob watch on a tortoise. [Talk about "nyah" inaudible]
87. Teacher: Who's boasting then?
88. Unidentifiable voices: Hare, no the tortoise, no the hare, it's the rabbit...

The children were beginning to make further connections as we talked about the pictures in terms of their surrealistic visual puns and, finally, realised why the rabbit is not a hare. At the beginning of the year the children had drawn their own surrealist pictures in relation to the exhibition which was showing in Canberra (March, 1993). We had looked at the style of artists like Dali and Magritte. As a result, the children had some idea of what I was referring to when I used the term 'surreal' but, at times, they found the pictures difficult to interpret. In line 48 Annie, again, referred to the colours as 'dull' On reflection, I think she was trying to

articulate that they have a certain density, a flatness, but she knew 'they felt right'. When Helen says, "They're stupid tales. I mean it would be funny in bright colours." (line 50), she was, I suspect, beginning to voice her awareness that these kinds of tales require different kinds of pictures, ones that, "...depict unrealistic situations in a highly representational way that makes the impossible seem strangely possible." (Nodelman, 1992, p.140)

It was Helen who followed the growing strands of hair from page to page, and commented on the 'not', as in knot, and delighted in chanting "nyah, nyah ..." (line 78). Then right at the end (line 88) the children were still debating the outcome of the race, "Who won, the tortoise or the rabbit?" However, the children suggested that it might be the rabbit since its brown strand of hair is attached to the 'Once' of the next story. At this point, the children were gradually becoming aware of the lack of closure in the story, a feature which they had already experienced in "Jack's Story". Scieszka and Smith give the readers the opportunity to become aware of this literary feature in the way they colour code and position 'Once upon a time' and 'The end' in their stories. When the 'The end' is missing at the conclusion of "The Hair and the Rabbit", it is a signal that the ending is open-ended. The children are, then, invited to make their own interpretations.

It is not surprising, given the surrealist nature of the illustrations and positioning of the text, that minor detail was missed during the first readings or viewing. The children overlooked the unexpected ending of Little Red Hen in her story. Although they were able to follow the disjointed story as it weaves its way through the book, they were taken by surprise at the end when they discovered Little Red Hen's fate.

14. Teacher: Why is Little Red Hen asking these questions?
15. Mary: Because she hasn't got a spot in the book yet.
16. Teacher: Yes she is having great difficulty. [Children search for more of "Little Red Hen"]
17. Teacher: Who does help her eat the bread?
18. Annie: The giant.
19. Teacher: What does it say Gina?
20. Gina: "Eat says the giant"
21. Teacher: What happens?
22. Annie: [Loud gasp] He has the hen.
23. Helen: He has a chicken sandwich. [Laughter]
24. Teacher: How do you know it is a chicken sandwich?
25. Helen: Feathers ... because the feathers and legs are sticking out.
26. Fiona: [Tape inaudible] Jack would want to escape.

Group 2, in their second session, were keen to share the actual story of "The Stinky Cheese Man" and, as the transcript indicates, the focus was mainly on the layout and composition of the pictures.

1. Teacher: What do you notice about the title or heading?
2. Kylie: The same colour as the "Once upon a time" bit.
3. Jane: And the end if we ever get to the end.
[Susan begins reads the first page of the story.]
4. Teacher: Before we turn over, what is different about this page to all the others?
5. Kylie: It has a picture in the middle. It's a little house in the middle of the forest.
[She looks to the picture on the facing page.] Look at the Stinky Cheese Man, a piece of cheese has been cut out of him.
6. Teacher: Just for a minute look at the house and
7. Kylie: The trees make the house look far away.
8. Teacher: How has he used the trunk of the trees? The perspective is most unusual.
9. Kylie: Like a border thing.
10. Kim: Or an arch.
11. Teacher: That house is really tiny. What technique has he used to make you focus on it.
12. Susan: The light sky in the shape of the house. It's very light compared to the forest.
13. Teacher: Point to where your eye comes to first, and then where does your eye go?
[Tape inaudible] Yes, if that was all dark forest, you would hardly see that little house. Any more comments about the way it has been illustrated before I turn over.
14. Kim: I can see the Stinky Cheese Man ... in the oven because all the fire is around him.
15. Kylie: You don't put cheese in the oven, it would melt.
16. Beth: It's stinky cheese maybe it's hard.
17. Teacher: You would think it would run all out of shape. What kind of cheese does it remind you of?
18. Jane: I know. I think it is brie or camembert.
19. Teacher: Soft cheeses.... We'll turn over. I hadn't noticed the fire there before . Every time look at it I see something new. Right Susan. Before we begin reading, what's happened to the text on these two pages?
20. Zoe: There's only half a page of text.
21. Jane: He's melting, the page has started to melt.
22. Kylie: Here's the lady and man and they've been knocked over by the Stinky Cheese Man.
23. Kim: It says one page and half a page.
24. Teacher: What's disappeared here in the middle?
25. Children together: The gutter.
26. Teacher: Why are these curves here?
27. Kylie: He's melting and making a stink.
[Susan continues to read. Session finishes.]

During the next session, while the children were talking about "Jack's Bean Problem", Jane, because of the changing font size, indicated who is speaking in the story, as well as how loud or soft the voice should be. She took on Jack's role by reading in a voice to match the font size. (line 33) Then Kylie moved the talk to the giant when she noticed him chopping up the fairy tale books, indicating the notion of intertextuality.

[The talk begins with "Jack's Story". Kylie reads]

28. Zoe: It doesn't finish itself. I think it might be getting smaller and smaller because he says it so many times. They're losing their voice. They can't talk as loudly.

30. Jane: Who is telling the story?

31. Kylie: Jack.

32. Teacher: Let's go back to "Jack's Bean Problem".

33. Jane: Look at the font. The giant is treading on "forget" making it smaller. When he squeezed Jack...[Jane whispers the words of the tiny font at the top of the page.]

34. Zoe: Because it's Jack's bean problem and he doesn't like the giant interfering and then I think it's the giant's story and then it's Jack's. They're all to do with it. [Jane then reads all of "Jack's Bean Problem".]

35. Teacher: So the giant is speaking in upper case letters. [Kylie points to them.]

36. Kylie: The giant looks as though he is chopping up Jack's book.

37. Beth: He is cutting it up and then sticking it up together again on the next page.

38. Kylie: It is his story.

39. Teacher: He is changing the stories. Let's check the illustrations.

[Children try to read the print on the tiny fairy tale books at the base of the giant's beanstalk.]

40. Teacher: We'll turn over now.....I love this one because it is a montage of all the fairy stories. This page has got all the sayings from the fairy stories. [Beth reads "The Giant's Story".]

41. Kim: [Points to montage] Can we show you every one?

42. Jane: : The rose from Beauty and the Beast.

43. Kim: There's a bean up there, then the poisoned apple from Snow White, a boat from Noah's Ark, the pie with the magpie in it.

44. Teacher: Remember how Susan wrote her story of "Cinderella Continued"?....Susan what did you do with all your stories?

45. Susan: Mixed them all up.

46. Teacher: That's exactly what the giant has done here. Was it really the giant who mixed them up?

47. Kylie: Jack.....oh no Jon Scieszka wrote them.

48. Kim: There's the Ginger Bread Man, the glass slipper and the black cat, a little cottage, there's the golden egg as well from the hen; the witch.

49. Kylie: The wolf; the seven dwarfs. [Other children join in.]

50. Teacher: What was the word we used before when we mix up fairy tales?

51. Kylie: Inter..tex...uality.

52. Teacher: Yes intertextuality.

The children spent considerable time (line 40) with a magnifying glass trying to read the print on the tiny books and the torn pages at the base of the beanstalk. They had begun using a magnifying glass when looking for clues in Browne's The Tunnel (1989). On the following double spread, (the montage) guided by Kim, the children tried to name all the fairy tale elements and related fairy titles (lines 43, 48, 49). I, then, reminded them of Susan's story "Cinderella Continued". Next, I explained that the giant did exactly the same thing, and moved on to ask, "Was it the giant who really mixed them up?" Kylie had to think for a moment before replying, "Jack ... oh no Jon Scieszka wrote them." When Kylie remembered the term 'intertextuality', even though she had some difficulty pronouncing it (line 51), it was indicative of how the use of literary language was adding to her

powers of reflection. Given that there are mostly pictures on the double spread, I could have used the term 'interpictoriality' in order to create an opportunity for later talk. After discussing the montage in "The Giant's Story" the children asked for "The Other Frog Prince" as they wanted to compare Scieszka's and Smith's re-working, now that they were familiar with The Frog Prince Continued (1991).

- 53. Kim: [She reads story aloud, children laugh at the end.]
- 54. Kylie: There's the little white things.....Oh yeah.
- 55. Zoe: The crown because the giant might have cut it out.
- 56. Unidentified voices: That's the weed; he's got a huge head; there's the teeth; the tongue.
- 57. Kim: He looks as though he is pulling down the thing [title] in his tongue.
- 58. Teacher: Of course the label. He is so clever. What sort of things would you find in a traditional fairy tale, a real Frog Prince?
- 59. Kim: The crown and that matches up with things from the giant's story.
- 60. Teacher: What is very different about the illustration?
- 61. Jane: His big tongue but you'd find a lily pad in a traditional one.
- 62. Kylie: The Frog Prince has got bits cut out like The Stinky Cheese Man.
- 63. Teacher: Have a look at those teeth again.
- 64. Kylie: Yeah, that's what I said. [She refers to white dots.]
- 65. Kim: Can I have a look at the next page? No it's a different story, "Little Red Running Shorts".
- 66. Teacher: Why is this illustration different to one you would find in a traditional story book?
- 67. Unidentified voices: A science book, or a dictionary, no its a project.
- 68. Teacher: It's almost like pulling this out of a file, [Points to tab.] pulling that out, [Points to mouth] undoing the zip. You know how we talked about Latin names in our birds? Would you read the scientific names. [Children enjoy trying to pronounce the names.]

While the children were commenting on the detail in the pictures, Zoe (line 55) made the connection with the "Giant's Story" when she said, "The crown ... because the giant might have cut it out", and next Kim (line 59) made a similar comment to confirm the connection, one story drawing on another, or making intertextual links. In lines 65-68, I directed the children to notice and comment on the nonfiction aspects of the picture, the combining of two different kinds of genre. They enjoyed trying to pronounce the scientific names on the frog's tongue. In a later session we compared this story with The Frog Prince Continued (1991), The Frog Who Would Be King (1987) and Princess Smarty Pants (1986), where we, again, focused on contemporary male and female roles and how they are often reversed.

It soon became evident that the class had progressed in reading visual codes and, at the same time, displayed an awareness of the illustrator's individual style. For example, during Week Five when the other Year Five teacher was

absent, I shared with both classes (28 children), The True Story of The 3 Little Pigs! (1989). Regardless of the increased size of the group, I decided to read the book as the number of children was still manageable. Furthermore, two extra copies of the book enabled most of the children to view the pictures. My own class, given their experience with The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales (1992), quickly observed the presence of the lines of tiny white dots, and delighted in making connections, for example, the furry animal filling in the cheeseburger. Jane noticed the ironic tone of the final picture, enabling the others to speculate upon other possible endings. It was a book my class returned to at a later time in order to focus on point of view and perspective, but in smaller groups where they were able to observe even more subtle detail and make deductions.

Evaluation

I suspect many of the children were surprised by the demands The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales (1992) placed upon them. As Susan, an experienced reader and author of "Cinderella Continued", recounted during one of the sessions, "I couldn't read it to my six year old sister, she just didn't get it." This is not surprising because the book expects a very active and experienced reader, and this is certainly implied when Jack the narrator suggests that the reader stand on his/her head to read the dedication. Because the book has an unconventional and humorous nature, its appeal seemed to increase with each re-reading. Many children returned to it time after time, in particular Helen and Prue, both of whom have a well developed sense of humour.

On examination of the transcripts I found further opportunities where responses could have been extended. However, I was aware that I should not try to alert the children to all the vital clues, or endeavour to discuss every issue during the first reading. Given that the children were making discoveries and commenting on the linguistic and narrative structures of the different stories, I found they were ready to reflect on the issues or themes contained in each story in later sharing sessions. For example, there were opportunities to talk further about honesty, an aspect of human behaviour in "The Princess and The Bowling Ball". I made a mental note to return to the story at a future time to enable the children to consider "When is lying really lying?"

Sometimes, in my attempt to adhere to the programme, I endeavoured to focus on too many aspects simultaneously. Nonetheless, as the programme progressed I became more sensitive to what could be achieved in each session. Both of the books explored in Weeks Four and Five gave the children good opportunities to begin to think critically in terms of the explicit devices used in both text and illustrations. For instance, when publishing their own stories, the children began to pay attention to end papers in order to create mood and atmosphere, as well as experimenting with framing and perspective in their pictures to present different points of view. The children had begun to become conscious of the significance of the unexpected and varied endings in the works of Scieszka, Johnson and Smith. The collection of stories had given the children an introduction to the concepts of story closure, revelation and resolution.

WEEK SIX

Wolf, Gillian Cross (1992)

Focus:

- The power of symbolic motifs,
- Appreciation of the way Cross has structured the story using the fairy tale "Little Red Riding Hood",
- The use of language to create strong images,
- Discussion of the themes Cross has developed:
 - the acceptance of the betrayal of a parent
 - the human desire of hope and trust.

At the beginning of Week Six, the fifteenth chapter of Wolf (1990) had been read. Suspense was mounting. Chapter Fifteen contains the threatening note demanding Cassy deliver the 'yellow lump' to her father within twenty four hours, or her grandmother will die. Before we began talking about the implications of the note the children wrote in their journals. Jenny's and Gina's entries (Appendix 3) mainly consisted of unanswered questions as they were having difficulty with the puzzle of the father's involvement. On the other hand Prue was making literary judgements about the way Cross had structured the story. For example, the dream sequences were having more meaning for Prue as she consciously

interweaved the two narratives. She, also, speculated on the reason for Mick's limp. At this stage none of the other children had connected Mick's limp to his I.R.A. activities.

It was good how Gillian Cross slipped little Red Riding Hood and the big bad wolf out of Cassy's dream and into the actual story. I wonder what the yellow stuff has to do with Cassy's Nan's death. Mick Phelan could have been hurt in the I.R.A. so that's why he runs with a limp in his leg.

(Prue, Appendix 3)

Prue had become a more distanced watcher or spectator⁵³. She was describing the involvement she experienced during the reading where she was undergoing phases of relative absorption with and detachment from the fictional events of the story⁵⁴. Whereas Beth projected herself into Cassy's character whose feelings she was sharing without the distancing.

Mick sounds like a maniac someone who doesn't have any feelings. I would hate to have a father who didn't care about anyone except himself and his career.

(Beth, Appendix 3)

Zoe's entry indicated how strong and confusing the image of the wolf was for her, although an awareness of the different wolves was beginning to emerge. She was trying to work it out by finding parallels in "The Three Little Pigs".

I think even more strongly that Mick could be a wear-wolf. Mabe [Sic] because Cassy is one of the three little pigs and if mick is a wear-wolf she might be at home alone and Mick turns up and says Cassy, Cassy let me in !

(Zoe, Appendix 3)

From the children's journals, I listed their unanswered questions (Transcript 8) and relevant comments to discuss with them before the book was finished. The following transcript shows the progression from Prue's

⁵³Britton took up the idea of the participant and the spectator from Harding(1963) who regarded the onlooker or spectator as being a non operative observer to the action. According to Britton the participant uses language to operate on the world, and the spectator uses language to operate on the represented world. Britton, J. Language and Learning. Harmondsworth, Allen Lane, 1970.

⁵⁴Benton, M. and Fox, G. Teaching Literature Nine to Fourteen Oxford: Oxford University Press,1985. His or her spectatorship will vary in the intensity of its commitment and attention to various phases of a novel.

comment about Mick's limp to talk about the making of the explosive, and then to the questions of why and who actually put it in Cassy's bag. This was a part of the story upon which the children frequently speculated.

1. Teacher: I really enjoyed looking at your journals and the sorts of questions you asked. Prue you brought up something no one else had mentioned. You brought up about Mick's limp. Prue made a suggestion how he got his limp. How do you think he may have got it?
2. Beth: When he was fighting he got hurt.
3. Mary: He was a hunch back as well.
4. Teacher: Obviously he had been injured because of the fighting he does. A lot of people asked this question. How did Mick get the yellow lump in the first place? [Jane inaudible.]
5. Susan: Like Jane said maybe he had a part that he, had to pass on to somebody else so it could be made.
6. Teacher: Because these bombs take some making. They usually do them in a back room or in some one's house. They have to hide to do it.
7. Beth: The back room of Nan's house.
8. Susan: Nan's back bedroom.
9. Teacher: Do you think Nan would allow bombs to be made in her back room? Remember how fussy she is.
10. Kim: Maybe he threatened her ...[inaudible]
11. Teacher: A possibility isn't it? The next question which came up, how did the lump get into Cassy's bag? None of us could make a decision on that before. There's probably no one right answer.
12. Jane: I think Nan put it in there because she ...
13. Kim: Nan put it in there so Mick wouldn't find it.
14. Jane: That's why he came back to get it when Nan said she didn't have it.
15. Kylie: He saw the postcard.
16. Teacher: Why didn't Nan want Mick to have the yellow lump?
17. Jessica: She thought it would be dangerous.
18. Jane: She doesn't like violence.
19. Helen: If that was right why did she give it to Cassy?
20. Teacher: That's a very good question. Why did she?
21. Jane: That's why I thought it might have been put in though.
22. Susan: Maybe when they [Nan and Mick] came in the dark ... accident.
23. Teacher: You still think it got in accidentally?
24. Several children: Yes.
25. Teacher: If it didn't get in accidentally why didn't Nan want the yellow lump out of her flat?
26. Kim: She didn't like it.
27. Teacher: If it had got in accidentally how would Mick have known Cassy had it? Why would he write the note to her? This raises two questions, "Why did Nan want it out of the flat" and "Why did she decide Cassy was the person who had to take it?"
28. Susan: Nan might have taken it when Mick was asleep. She wouldn't know where to put it when he woke up so it could have been shoved into the bag.
29. Kylie: She could have shoved it anywhere.
30. Susan: It could have got shoved in the bag but not completely ... by accident but Nan could have got scared.
31. Teacher: What was wrong with Nan just finding a cupboard or somewhere in the flat to hide it?
[Children. talk excitedly.]
32. Susan: She could have got really scared like
33. Teacher: Nan is such a well organised, fussy person. Would that be typical of Nan's behaviour?

34. Susan: No, she is a fussy individual. But she couldn't be like that all the time.
 35. Helen: Was Mick just chasing after ... not Goldie but Cassy's Grandma or was he chasing after the whole family?
 36. Kylie: Just the yellow stuff.
 37. Teacher: The explosive was what he wanted. He knew if he took Nan prisoner, that Cassy would be forced back. That was a threat to get Cassy back with it.
 38. Helen: Ah I was a bit confused in that part.
 39. Kim: Susan could be right because if you're got something you shouldn't have and some one's coming up the stairs, you just put it anywhere.
 40. Jane: If you get scared you sort of get paralysed.
 41. Prue: She could have put it in Cassy's bag because Mick wouldn't have thought that she would have given it to Cassy and put her in danger, so Mick wouldn't know.
 42. Teacher: I think that is quite a good point, a possibility. We never really know the real reason. We have to work it out for ourselves.

This was a time when the talk moved from sharing to more focused conversation. The children were not just making individual comments but talking in a group to reflect on events and characterisation in the story in order to justify their arguments. The children, in particular Susan, found it difficult to believe that Cassy's grandmother would hide the explosive in the bag Cassy was to use, as a means of removing it from the flat (lines 22-41). Most of the children felt sure the grandmother had placed it there accidentally. This dialogue led the children to reflect on the grandmother's character, that of being fussy and particular. Regardless of this reference, Kim (line 39) was still not convinced when she said, "Susan could be right because if you're got something you shouldn't have and someone's coming up the stairs, you just put it anywhere." The last part of this session centred around Fiona's comment in her journal, "The name of the book means a lot to the story". In line 51, I asked her to expand upon it.

51. Teacher: Fiona, you brought up something really good in your journal and I'd like to talk about it for a moment. You said the name of the book means a lot to the story. Could you expand on that a little.
 52. Fiona: Because, Wolf, the book is all about wolves and Mick is involved with wolves.
 53. Teacher: [I address the group] You have heard me talk about the word, metaphor, before. The name of the book Wolf is really a metaphor for the whole story ... What does a wolf mean to you?
 54. Mary: Howling and scared.
 55. Helen: Fierce
 56. Susan: Werewolves [Other children agree]
 57. Teacher: If you were near a wolf what do you think it might do to you?
 58. Kim: Scare me.
 59. Mary: Might hurt you.
 60. Think of some of the stories you know with wolves in them.
 61. Jane: "White Fang" it's a movie. [Children join in and decide it is not harmful.]
 62. Susan: When you read the story it kind of makes you think that wolves are like that but then if I hadn't read the book I wouldn't have thought it would be like that because of "The Jungle Books". Most of the books I've read they're really nice wolves and that. They look after people.

This was an interesting conversation because, in my effort to help the children come to an understanding of the changing metaphor 'wolf', Susan displayed her knowledge of wolf-lore, not the stereotype presented in fairy tales but one gleaned from Kipling's The Jungle Book (1984). Most of the class, having never seen a real wolf, saw them as frightening animals who go to great lengths to hunt down human beings, an image reinforced in traditional fairy tales like "Little Red Riding Hood". The session finished, not with discussion of the metaphor 'wolf' and its evil symbolism, but as a starting point for a conversation about animal stereotypes. The conversation about our preconceived image of the wolf arose spontaneously many times during the following week.

By the end of the week I had read the three remaining chapters. While the final reading was in progress, Jane placed a "Do not enter" sign on the door so we would not be disturbed during the chilling last moments of Cassy's plight to save her grandmother within the twenty four hour deadline. Before the children began their collages, which were to depict the most vivid images they had gained from the story, we talked about the book in general. First, I began by asking them to retell the story briefly, a task Fiona, Prue and Kim found quite difficult given the book's complexity (lines 1-6).

1. Teacher: First of all I want to ask you what the story was about.
2. Fiona: It was about a little girl called Cassy who lived with her gran who sent her away and she went to live with her mother called Goldie. She went to the place she used to live and she had moved and now she
3. Teacher: Thank you Fiona. Do you think anybody could put the idea of the story into three or four sentences, without telling everything that happened?
4. Prue: And she went to her mother who was living with Lyall, he was a sort of a husband, not a boyfriend. He had a son called Robert. Cassy and Robert liked each other and they were in a squat.
5. Teacher: Thank you Prue. If somebody asked you to write a blurb for the back of the book, what would you write?
6. Kim: Cassy's gone to live with her mother. Her nan didn't want her and she doesn't know what's going on. A man keeps on coming to get into her mother's house.
[Children go off to write their own blurbs and then return to share them.]
7. Prue: [Reads] Cassy's Nan sends her away to stay with Goldie, her mother is in a squat. Cassy's father went away when she was a baby. A man keeps on trying to get into the house to get the yellow explosive back. He holds up Nan and in the end. Goldie calls the police. He goes to gaol and he was in the I.R.A.
8. Fiona: In the story Wolf, Cassy lived with her Nan and was sent to live with her Mum. Her Dad is the Cray Hill Bomber and Cassy has the yellow lump and has to give it back or her Nan will die.
9. Annie: A girl called Cassy lived with her Nan but her Nan sent her away to live with her Mum. Then her Dad comes who she has never seen before, haunts her because she has something very important.
10. Teacher: I liked the way you used that word 'haunt'.
[Beth reads hers but it is inaudible in parts. She mentions the 24 hour deadline.]

11. Susan: Cassy goes to stay with her mother and Lyall in London. Mick, her father, who she has not known, is in the I.R.A. By accident Cassy gets the plastic explosive and Mick wants it back. On her own Cassy travels to her Nan's flat but she does not have the explosive. Goldie, her mother, brings it and rescues her. Nan was kidnapped but she is all right in the end.

As it was evident some children were having difficulty articulating the main ideas of Wolf (1990), I asked them to write a paragraph containing the relevant parts of the story. I wanted them to view the book as a whole in order to gauge their understanding of what the book meant to them, not just a retelling. In lines 7-11, Prue and Fiona, after time to deliberate, demonstrated their ability to choose some of the main ideas, while Susan (line 11) provided the most cohesive account. However, it was Annie's use of 'haunt' (line 9) that created a feeling of mystery as it was more than a plot summary. Without going into minor detail she was able to convey the emotional atmosphere of the story. Annie's use of 'haunt' gave me the opportunity to move the children toward projecting their own emotions into the story.

12. Teacher: Close your eyes really tightly. I want you to think of any feeling you felt while I was reading the story. [Children spend a few minutes making jottings on their pads to help them think.]

13. Mary: I was anxious to know what happened with her father.

14. Teacher: How did you feel about that?

15. Mary: Funny feelings in my tummy.

16. Annie: I had a funny feeling in my tummy when the Nan was all hooked up in the bath and when her hands were tied to the taps.

17. Prue: I was anxious at the end because I didn't know what was going to happen to Nan or whether she would get there in twenty four hours.

18. Gina: I felt sorry for Cassy when her Nan sent her away. [Susan and Jane inaudible.]

19. Beth: I felt annoyed when Lyall kept cracking jokes.

20. Teacher: He wasn't taking her seriously at all.

21. Fiona: I felt scared when the wolf mask had the yellow explosive in it.

22. Teacher: Why?

23. Fiona: Because it might have blown up.

24. Teacher: It needed a detonator to make it explode. It couldn't go off by itself.

25. Jessica: I felt sorry for Cassy when end..[Inaudible]

26. Teacher: What about at the end when she was screaming in the school. How were you feeling then?

27. Prue: I felt sorry for Cassy and I was embarrassed when she stopped screaming. No one knew what to do

28. Teacher: When you get so emotional you get past the stage of thinking of what other people think because you well up inside.

29. Jane: I was anxious to know what Mick was going to do in the flat.

30. Teacher: We had no idea what he was doing to Nan in the flat, did we? It is incredible to imagine that somebody would tie up their own mother.

31. Fiona: I was worried if she died where would Cassy go?

Each child voiced her own feelings, with Fiona's comment then moving the focus to Cassy's future.

33. Prue: What happened at the end when ... did she go to her mother or Nan or somewhere else?
34. Jane: Cassy might have gone to live with Goldie until Nan got better or the next door neighbour, Mrs. Rammage might look after Cassy.
35. Teacher: What sort of person did you gather Mrs. Rammage to be?
36. Jane: Older ...
37. Jessica: Would Goldie and Lyall and Robert leave the squat and go and live with Nan?
38. Teacher: Do you think it would work out at Nan's with Goldie and Lyall and Robert living at the flat? [No] Why not?
39. Susan: Because they're different. Nan's all fussy, particular, I mean.
40. Teacher: Whereas they have a completely different lifestyle. [Talk about squat, how it is like camping.]
41. Annie: What sort of time is it set, today or ...?
42. Prue: Probably today ... because they had police and trains. They had stoves and fish and chips.
43. Teacher: What makes you think it wouldn't be set in the nineties?
44. Jane: It would be set not in the nineties, the eighties I reckon. [Inaudible talk - arguing about when it was set]
45. Annie: 1988 or 1989.
46. Teacher: Are there any clues in the story that would give us an idea of the actual time?
47. Fiona: I think it was about ten years ago or twenty because they had squats then.
48. Jane: They didn't have a bath.
49. Teacher: A bathroom that is working. [Talk is about trains and subways.] Are we all agreed that it is set in the last few years? [Yes.]
50. Gina: Would Cassy still go and visit Goldie and Lyall?
51. Susan: I'll think she'll go back to her grandmother's but she'll go and visit Goldie in the holidays or something.
52. Kylie: Mrs. Bennett because Mick's gone Grandma won't send her away any more ... because he's in gaol.
53. Teacher: That's true.
54. Jane: I want Lyall and Goldie to get married. [Yes]
55. Prue: I'd like there to be wolf too [Wolf Two]
56. Teacher: What kind of wolf? A real wolf?
57. Prue: No! Just Wolf Two, the book.
58. Teacher: You would like there to be a sequel. I see. [Children all agree.]
59. Jane: Mick gets out of gaol.
[Some children shout "No"]
60. Teacher: How long do you think Mick might go to gaol for?
61. Children: Ten years, a life time, a couple of years until she's grown up.

The talk about Cassy's future indicated some children's desire for 'a happy ending', for example, Jessica (line 37) wanting to know if Goldie and Lyall would move in with the grandmother. However, it was Susan (line 51) who demonstrated an awareness of the personality differences, and reflected on how Cassy might continue to live with her grandmother but visit Goldie during holidays, inferring how things really were. Jane, on the other hand, (line 54) hoped that Lyall and Goldie would get married, the stereotypical ending. Prue wanted a sequel, 'Wolf Two'. Such comments were indicative of the children requiring a resolution of 'the happy family'. Nonetheless, for some, the revelation of Mick Phelan's association with the

I.R.A. and his subsequent capture had not completely satisfied them. Many children shouted "No" when Jane (line 59) suggested that the sequel should be set when Mick is released from gaol. The ending is an open one, which does not achieve total closure, and thus the children had many unanswered questions to which they wanted reassurance. It was interesting to observe how the talk digressed to allow Annie (line 41) to consider the setting of the story, an aspect we had talked about previously, but one which she was still unclear.

The following excerpt shows how I endeavoured to direct the children to consider the effect the experience might have on Cassy.

- 64. Teacher: Do you think she'll go back to school? How do you think it is going to affect her for the next year or so?
- 65. Kim: [Was away for the last chapter.] Maybe she won't be so fussy ... she wants to use a knife and fork. Maybe she'll be more quieter.
- 66. Teacher: Fussy about what?
- 67. Kim: Like she didn't really like the lifestyle. She wanted to eat with a knife and fork.
- 68. Jane: That [the experience] might have brought Goldie and Cassy closer together. [Inaudible talk]
- 69. Annie: Does she still have the dreams? Will she still have the dreams or are they over now?
- 70. Teacher: What do you think Annie?
- 71. Jane: They might get better and then the woodcutter comes into her dream.
- 72. Annie: Instead of nightmares, she'll have dreams.
- 73. Teacher: Do you think the dreams will stop or continue.?
- 74. Susan: I'll think she'll have one or two more dreams and that will resolve it. They will be the only dreams.
- 75. Teacher: What kind of resolution do you think? Could you expand on that.
- 76. Susan: Probably she'll get rescued by the woodcutter.
- 77. Teacher: Who would you like to be Cassy's woodcutter?
- 78. Unidentified voice: Lyall.
- 79. Jane: I think Goldie was the woodcutter because Goldie sort of rescued her.
- 80. Teacher: She was actually the woodcutter wasn't she? [Laughter]
- 81. Jane: I thought it was going to be Lyall.

Again the talk began to become more reflective, when Kim (line 65) said, "Maybe she'll be more quieter", a remark on which I did not comment. However, it soon became apparent to Annie the effect the dreams were having on Cassy, and that they could continue for some time. Jane (line 71), then, referred to the woodcutter appearing in Cassy's dream, and later she developed this idea further after Susan (lines 76) had said, "Probably she'll get rescued by the woodcutter". Jane replied, "I think Goldie was the woodcutter because Goldie sort of rescued her." Some of the children at this point, in particular Susan and Jane, were using one of the symbolic motifs of fairy tale, the woodcutter, to see Goldie in a new light, not as an

irresponsible mother, but as the person who takes charge of the situation, the rescuer. The rescuer was not to be Lyall as many had anticipated.

Nearing the end of the session I asked the children to consider parts of the story that might make them think of things in their own lives to assess what opportunities the book had given them to reflect on their own emotional life. Given that the situation in Wolf (1990) is far removed from their past experiences, I prefaced my question with this assumption. My flippant comment (line 139) drew laughter. I should have been worded more thoughtfully. Nevertheless, Jessica alluded to Cassy's screams at the school during the wolf presentation and, likewise, Annie shared similar feelings about knowing when somebody had been in her room.

139. Teacher: Think about this question before you answer it. Obviously your own fathers aren't people who go round shooting people or ... [Laughter] Now think of the parts of the story ... Is there anything in your own lives that has happened to you. You might not want to tell me ... While I was reading the story what made you think of things in your own life or something you've read?

140. Jessica: When she screamed in the [school] hall ...

141. Teacher: When have you wanted to scream like that?

142. Jessica: When she had her head ...

143. Annie: When she knew somebody had been in her room. Like, no ...probably just my mum or something.

144. Teacher: That's what I was meaning "Somebody's been at my things" the same feelings. [Children share experiences.]

It was my intention to extend this conversation further at a later session, with Meek's questions (1998, p. 29), "What would I do if I found myself in that [Cassy's] situation?" and "Is there a part of me that understands them?"

The children, before the final session of talking (Tr. 11), wrote newspaper reports about Mick Phelan's capture, some of which contained interviews. At that stage we had not considered any of the emotional implications and, as a result, most of the reports were mainly factual accounts. However, the writing provided the children with the opportunity to distance themselves from the story, for example, Helen was able to allude to how Cassy felt.

Kathalin Phealen [Sic] daughter of Mick and her grandmother (Mick's mother) were settled down and untied after Mick had held them hostage Cassie (as known) is two upset to speak like her grandmother so we went next door to ask a few questions.

(Helen, Appendix 3)

Mary, in her report, included an interview with Goldie.

....she is a little upset but we interviewed her.
"Are you a relation to Mick?"
"Yes I am his ex wife"
"Are you sorry for Mick?"
"No I hope he dies in jail, that's what he deserves!"
"Are you regretting [Sic] what you just said?"
"Sort of, I don't know maby [Sic] he does - mabey [Sic] he
doesn't. I don't care!"
"Thank you for your time."

(Mary, Appendix 3)

Mary's writing is an example of a reader projecting herself into the feelings of the character. She is displaying her emotional reaction to Mick's violence. Mary, like others in the class, had not yet reached the stage where she could stand back and think critically regardless of her own feelings. On reflection, this interview could have been the basis for talk when we later discussed Cassy's future, and how all the characters might change in light of the events of the story. It would have been useful to set up a number of interviews to allow the children to compare their speculations.

Throughout the book the children were being asked to "create pictures in the mind's eye" as suggested by Geoff Fox. Transcript 7, Appendix 7 contains a list of the images which the children constantly saw in their minds. High on their lists were the symbolic motifs from "Little Red Riding Hood" such as the wolf. However, I was surprised that the wolf image had not been included in many of the collages, but instead a clock denoting the twenty four hour countdown, an image suggesting suspense. Later I discovered, when talking to some children, that the reason for the wolf's omission was partly due to their inability to make or draw a wolf. Furthermore, for some children, the changing face of the wolf in the story may have created confusion and, therefore, they may have been unsure or unable to articulate what the wolf meant to them in the final stages of the story. The photograph in Appendix 8 is an example of some of the finished pieces.

Evaluation

Although I have described much of the talk related to Wolf (1990) in Week Six, it extended into Weeks Seven and Eight while the children worked on their collages, during which time I shared with them the picture book, The

Wolf (1991) by Margaret Barbalet and Jane Tanner. Through their recent experiences of Wolf (1990) and re-worked fairy tales, like Browne's Hansel and Gretel (1982), I found they were eager to consider the symbolic motifs of the changing and foreboding blue, the perspective and angle in the pictures signifying point of view, the significance of the leaves, Dai's illness and the down-turned photograph.

Despite some awareness of the symbolic motifs, the children found this picture book more difficult to understand than Cross's longer novel Wolf (1990). They were unable to decide for themselves for whom was the wolf real. The metaphoric symbolism of the 'wolf' was at a more implicit level, and the ending too open-ended. For some, the absence of the wolf in the pictures, only the suggestion of the menace, was confusing. Several children wanted to read the story literally as they wanted the wolf to be let in as a pet. Considering their experience with the symbolism of the different wolves in Cross's book, I was surprised to find their encounter so problematic. My previous Year Five had found the book interesting in terms of what lay hidden beneath the surface features (Appendix 9).

However, "The acquisition of experience is not a matter of adding on - it is a restructuring of what they already possess". (Iser, 1978, p.132). As I had commented on earlier in the paper, regardless of the complexity of the story, children need to be aware of how the explicit devices operate before grasping the more implicit ones. Because many of the children had gained some understanding of the symbolism in Wolf (1990), I mistakenly took for granted their encounter with The Wolf (1991) would be similar, without first considering the kinds of demands it makes of the reader.

While talking about the ending of Cross's Wolf (1990), I should have posed more directly the question, "Was it a good ending?" followed by "Why or why not?". We only talked about it in terms of Cassy's future, not in the 'here and now'. I did, however, re-read the dream sequences to the children before they commenced their collages to enable them to re-think the images of the dreams to see how they contributed to the revelation at the conclusion. This focus gave them a further opportunity to stand back and examine the metafictional devices Cross used to construct her story.

During the reading I had not consciously asked the children to consider how the events are presented in words, instead my focus had been chiefly on the

narrative structure. Nonetheless, Cross with her strong use of image, draws the children's attention to the way she writes. Immediately a sense of mystery is created with her of short, rhythmic sentences, not unlike the writing of Philippa Pearce.

But he woke Cassy. She lay in her bed under the window and listened as the footsteps stopped outside. There were two quick, light taps on the front door. Then a pause and then two more taps, like a signal.

(Cross, 1990, p.1)

The reading of Wolf (1990), with its fairy tale structure and related symbolism, provided me with the opportunity to reflect on ways to develop the children's responses at a more critical level. The children were beginning to recognise similar metafictional devices that they had encountered in the re-worked fairy tales, like those in Browne's Hansel and Gretel (1982). Furthermore, the transcripts and collages indicated that the children had gained much from their interest and talk about Wolf (1990). Several parents commented on their children's preoccupation with the fairy tale theme in the book, and after viewing the collages on display were keen to read it for themselves.

WEEKS SEVEN AND EIGHT

Other curricular demands were being placed upon classroom time by mid-term, thus making it increasingly difficult to follow the original plan. I found I had chosen to focus on too many books without allowing adequate time for the children to consider them. Nonetheless, the children were constantly taking the re-worked fairy tales from the display, either to read during silent reading or to share with a friend. Given that most of the children were familiar with the Ahlbergs' work and Dahl's and Blake's Revolting Rhymes (1982), (They had viewed the video many times), I made the decision only to introduce the work of Tony Ross in the final stages of the unit, as his books tended to be overlooked on the display. At first I encouraged the children to browse through Ross's books before we considered Puss in Boots (1981). In Transcript 10, I talked with Annie about her reading of Lazy Jack (1985).

Puss in Boots, Tony Ross (1981)

Focus:

- Appreciation of Ross's caricatures and use of satire,
- The filmic quality of his visual narrative,
- Visual detail in the settings and development of character,
- The theme of trickery.

I chose Puss in Boots (1981) because it was the one of which I had the most copies. Due to its compact size it was not a book to share with a large class. I, again, divided them into two groups, with one copy between three. During the thirty minute session with Group 1 there was much direction, since I was keen for them to become aware of Ross's style, one which is both witty and subtle. In light of the sophistication of the detail in his pictures, I felt that my approach was justified. However, I soon discovered that the twists and barbs could easily be missed. In this first discussion my focus was mostly directed to the layout and style of pictures.

1. Teacher: Tony Ross is different to Jon Scieszka. This is not a big book. That's why we have to get in really close. One of the reasons I want to share his books with you is that he retells fairy tales. He keeps to the traditional tale but it is the way he does the illustrations which are different. He is very clever. Does anybody know this story?
2. Jessica: There was an old miller. He sent his daughter to the king and [She is unable to complete it.]
3. Teacher: No, he doesn't have a daughter. He has three sons.
[The other children can't remember the story. They list the versions they do know.]
4. Teacher: We'll start "Puss in Boots". We're going to have a good look at how Ross does the framing. While I read I want you to look very carefully because it's like playing "I spy". [The story is read, comments are made during the reading. Helen says that they are cartoon pictures.]
5. Teacher: What words would you use to describe Puss?
6. Children: Sly, sneaky, crafty, dishonest.
7. Teacher: What about Jack? Is he dishonest?
8. Gina: He is a good man.
9. Annie: No he's not. He did take the credit for it.
10. Teacher: Why doesn't Jack understand these things?
11. Prue: He doesn't know what the cat's done. He's meant to be a prince.
12. Teacher: Why doesn't he catch on?
13. Prue: Because he's dumb. [Talk about other words for dumb. Dopey....simple]
14. Teacher: [Points to picture.] Have a look at the black line.
15. Prue: I think it's blurred.
16. Teacher: Some illustrators call it a key line and the white space around is called air space. [Children laugh.]
16. Helen: It looks as if it's been cut out because it's bumpy.
17. Prue: They haven't used a ruler.
18. Fiona: Freehand.
19. Teacher: If its freehand what effect do you think you get with that?
20. Fiona: Cartoon. [Inaudible talk about cartoons.]

21. Teacher: [Points to page 1.] We're got text in the bottom half, a half plate. Sometimes when you're got a full picture you call it a full plate.
22. Mary: And around the edges look like air.
23. Annie: [She refers to Ross's Jack and the Beanstalk.] In that book they're got that line as well.
24. Teacher: I'll get you to compare his other book later to see if he does the same thing. Yes I think in Puss in Boots and Jack and the Beanstalk the illustrations are set out in a similar way. Have a look at how many illustrations are on this page.
25. Children: [Turn from page to page.] 4, 3, .., more
26. Teacher: [Returns to page 2.] Have a look at the colours. [Children talk about the different characters]
27. Mary: The pictures are parted with a little white space.
28. Prue: I said that before.
29. Teacher: Each background is a different colour.
30. Helen: They're set out like comics.
31. Teacher: We could go a step further than comics. Its almost like being at the ...
32. Children: movies. [Teacher turns to page 7.]
33. Children: Darkwood Manor
34. Teacher: Look at this focus. Where do you think you are when you're looking at it?
35. Jessica: Behind the cat.
36. Teacher: Yes it's as if you're going to go on the journey with the cat.
37. Prue: The pictures over there [page 6.] aren't set out all that evenly.
38. Teacher: Look at the bottom one where does it lead you?
39. Prue: To the cat ... up to the castle.
40. Teacher: [Turns to page 2.] Let's play I spy. What can you see that's a bit strange?
41. Children: A wolf, needles, medicines.
42. Annie: x x skull
43. Teacher: What does that stand for?
44. Prue: Poison.
45. Teacher: He has just died!
46. Helen: One of the sons has tried to kill him or something.
47. Teacher: The sons or
48. Children: The cat.
49. Teacher: Who knows.
50. Teacher: Now if you look at the people Tony Ross has drawn, there is something similar.
51. Annie: I know. Is it their noses?
52. Prue: The mouth. Look at the long legs.
53. Annie: Skinnylook at the arms.
54. Helen: Wobbly little things.
55. Teacher: That is Tony Ross's particular style.
56. Helen : Most of them have hats on. [Talk about the hat shapes.]
57. Helen: Hang on he's using stripes. [Session finishes with children finding the stripes]

It took some time before Group 1 became conscious of the many features which make the characters or caricatures in this book so amusing. (lines 51-57). However, it was Helen, with her ever present sense of humour, who likened the pictures to cartoons and comics and was the most perceptive. In lines 5-14, we considered very briefly the issue of trickery, one which gave me the basis for talk with both groups at a later session. The above

transcript does not adequately convey how strongly the children felt about Puss's dishonesty. They were, in fact, very disapproving.

Group 2 had a greater number of experienced readers, many of whom had an increased appreciation of Ross's style, but differed in their ideas about Puss's behaviour. Unfortunately lack of time precluded the making of further deductions from the pictures during this particular session.

1. Teacher: Today girls, and over the next week or so we are going to study the illustrations of Tony Ross. He is a brilliant illustrator in the way he illustrates his stories. He hasn't interweaved or intertwined the fairy tales. He tells each tale separately but he makes some changes and he interprets them differently by using his illustrations. Who could tell us the story?
2. Zoe: There are three sons and the father owns the mill and the father dies and he leaves one of the brothers the mill. I don't know what he left the second son, the third son the cat. [Zoe doesn't finish.]
3. Teacher: Do you know what happened at the end of the story?
4. Kylie: Something about a giant?
5. Teacher: Let's read it and find out.
6. Jane: [Teacher shows cover] Big boots.
7. Teacher: No endpapers perhaps because some soft covers don't have them.
8. Here we have the title page, a circular picture here and one of the main characters.
9. Kim: The story of a Sneaky Cat.
10. Jane: Oh cool!
11. Teacher: "Long, long ago ..."
12. Kylie: For Mum and Dad
13. Teacher: Oh yes the dedication.
[Story is read with occasional pauses to comment on the story. Children find it very amusing.]
14. Kim: He's winking.
15. Teacher: Why do you think he is winking?
16. Kim: Because he wants to keep it a secret.
17. What did Tony Ross call this cat? He used some describing words.
18. Jane: Sneaky cat.
19. Susan: Crafty.
20. Teacher: What do you think of Jack and what he did?
21. Jane: Cool.
22. Zoe: Jack's the boy.
23. Jane: A bit wimpy.
24. Teacher: What's the word used in the story for that?
25. Beth: Simple.
26. Teacher: What do you think of Puss?
27. Jane: Clever.
28. Kim: Very sneaky.
29. Teacher: Do you think it's a "good" kind of cleverness?
30. Children: Yes. [All appear to agree]
31. Teacher: In what ways do you think he is clever?
32. Kim: Yes in two ways. The castle has been put to good use. The ogre is dead and puss killed him so that is good.
33. Teacher: Who wins out?
34. Kim: The Marquis of Carabas, Jack.
35. Teacher: So Jack becomes the hero. You think that is clever? What about the part you don't think is clever?
36. Jane: Puss doesn't get much.

37. Kylie: He bought him the boots and the bag, whatever he wanted.
38. Zoe: And the Puss is the Chief Mouser.
39. Teacher: Now what do you think about Puss's actions, his cleverness? Let's look at the sneaky side of it.
40. Kim: He got the ogre to change into the mouse so he could eat him.
41. Zoe: Putting the lettuces out.
[Tape inaudible, Kylie mentions magic.]
43. Teacher: What about the trickery, how do you consider that.
44. Jane: Good. [Others appear to agree.]
45. Kim: Its kind of a bit funny how Jack didn't know anything about it. He didn't know he was the Marquis of Carabas.
46. Teacher: If Jack was a bit simple or a bit thick as you said ... [Kylie diverts the children's attention.]
47. Kylie: There, look at all the stripes in the picture.
48. Teacher: How observant Kylie. It took ages for the other group to notice those stripes. If you look in every one [other Ross books]
49. Kylie: On the cover, shirt. [Children find them.]
50. Children: Shorts, clothing, stockings
51. Teacher: The stripes are Tony Ross's signature.
52. Jane: Those hats are cool.
53. Teacher: You call these stove pipe hats and you'll find them in all his books, like the stripes.

The talk in Group 2 focused mainly on Puss's actions, ones which all the children, especially Jane, condoned. They considered that Puss was 'cool' and his actions 'clever' (lines 21, 27). Kim (line 32) justified his behaviour by pointing out that "The castle has been put to good use and the ogre is dead and Puss killed him so that is good". Furthermore, Jane like the others, missed the irony when she said, "Puss doesn't get much", meaning material rewards, with Kylie responding, "He [Jack] bought him the boots and the bag". Shortly afterwards, Zoe (line 38) added that Puss would be Chief Mouser; however, the children were not aware of the opportunities Puss might have for manipulation and trickery in his position at the royal household. Kim (line 45) alluded to Jack's ignorance, but then Kylie re-focused the talk to Ross's use of stripes in his pictures.

Both groups enjoyed the jokes and incongruities in the pictures, but missed some of the mental challenges posed by Ross; they needed to make deductions from the visual evidence. For example, I spent time with Group 1 suggesting they focus on the medicines in order to encourage them to notice the poison bottle in the first frame on page two (lines 40-49). It was then that they were able to speculate on the reason for the miller's death in the Ross's version.

Later that day when both groups were together, I asked them to consider Puss's trickery in light of the evidence presented in the story but, Jane,

backed by others from her group, would not move from her stance. I was unable to facilitate a dialogue between the two groups, as Kylie from Group 1 had difficulty articulating her reasons, apart from the obvious ones in the plot. It was not the time for me to become didactic. I knew it would be inappropriate to intervene since I wanted the children to interpret the moral issue for themselves.

Evaluation

What became very apparent during this session was the effort required on the part of the children to notice descriptive detail in the pictures. I found that in allowing them to track through the pages playing 'I spy' was not sufficient for them to extend the meaning of the visual narrative. On the other hand making deductions was taxing work. We came back to the book at other times to re-look at the pictures, for example, to consider the reaction of the brothers to their father's death. The drunken brother in the first reading/viewing had gone unnoticed and we had not discussed fully the metaphorical significance of Puss's wild golden eyes. It was not a clear re-working despite the comical surface features. Nonetheless, the children increasingly became aware of the way Ross uses satire, and were ready to begin to appreciate his other folk and fairy tales and comment on his use of line and colour. Some children appeared to have developed the competence to interpret the visual symbols. The large amount of detail in his pictures is an example of the metafictional device Lewis refers to as 'excess'. It is this detailed information contained in the pictures which disturbs the stability of the text.

The issue of morality in the story of "Puss in Boots" is questionable, especially when children, like Jane, look upon the cat's sinful instructions as virtue. Nonetheless, Ross has developed the personality of Jack and gets round the moral dilemma by having two heroes, Jack and Puss. He appears to have done this by offering two different perspectives on the tale⁵⁵. The following week I shared with the children Fred Marcellino's version of Perrault's *Puss in Boots* (1991) with its exceptional pastel drawings. The girls quickly became engaged in the richly textured seventeenth century-like pictures which presented alternating points of view of the two characters.

⁵⁵ Doonan, Jane Tony Ross: "Art to Enchant" in *Signal: Approaches to Children's Books*. Stroud, Glos: Thimble Press, No. 34, January, 1985 (pp. 34-43)

Reviewing the programme

Sharing the books with the children throughout the programme demonstrated how important the teacher's role is in providing a situation and sustained focus where the children can hear what others say and discuss their shared observations. In order to enrich and extend their observations it increasingly became apparent that the way in which the questions were framed crucially affected the nature and complexity of the children's responses. For example, on examination of the transcript related to Baba Yaga (1988) in Week Three, the closed nature of the questions and the children's responses was evident. Therefore, it is not surprising that Jessica and Zoe appeared inhibited and had some difficulty in justifying and elaborating their responses.

On the other hand during the same week when sharing Browne's Hansel and Gretel (1981), the two groups of children were eager to participate and spent considerable time examining and discussing the choices Browne had made in the construction of the book. Through his illustrations Browne communicates a wealth of information to the reader which goes beyond the events related in the written text. On this first reading the questions were mainly open-ended to enable the children to become engaged in the detail of the illustrations and share their most common observations before moving on to the more abstract meanings, for example, the significance of the vertical bars, birds and shadows, the very heart of the book.

During the previous two weeks the children's powers of attention had begun to develop with their fascination with the changing earrings, symbolic motifs, in Snow White in New York (1986) and their enjoyment of the language and humorous 'froggy' motifs in The Frog Prince Continued (1991). In these early sessions time was spent considering the stereotypical or non-stereotypical roles of the characters in the books, as well as those in earlier traditional versions. Hence, later, when the children began to question Cassy's mother's role in Wolf (1990) they had some understanding of the concept of a traditional stereotype. Furthermore, they were becoming aware that a new set of expectations was needed with each new book. There was not a common plot structure.

In Week Three, after taping the children's responses in smaller groups (approximately seven children in each), I became very aware of the

importance of more intimate and informal conditions. Such conditions gave the less experienced readers greater opportunities and confidence to participate more freely when we shared the picture books. I could intervene more easily to model the kinds of questions and speculations that helped to deepen their understanding and appreciation. It was then I fully realised the benefits of taping the children's talk in order to make more objective analyses of my style of questioning and the way in which particular children were responding. For instance, while sharing Browne's The Tunnel (1989) and Hansel and Gretel (1981) there was evidence of the children developing metafictional competence in reading the visual symbols. They commented on the relationship between the two forests and the use of the colour red in both books. They were becoming aware of the significance of the detail and the use of intertextual references

The following two weeks when we began to focus on the metafictional elements in some of the stories from The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales (1992) the children were ready to reflect on its experimental nature. However, after the initial sharing I found the very open-ended questions to tap into their thinking were not always enough. Although such questions led to common observations and related discussion, more text-specific questions were needed to explore its narrative and linguistic structures. It was during these later discussions that I noted the children were beginning to learn the language about literature and to develop a way of talking about it. More than language, they were acquiring an understanding of how to extend the powers of enjoyment when reading a work. This enabled them to look more closely at the narrative codes explicitly contained in both the text and illustrations and to discuss the deliberate choices Scieszka and Smith had made. For example, the children became very interested in how Little Red Hen's story was woven through other stories, how Jack the narrator slipped in and out to talk to the readers or other characters, and how and the colour coding indicated beginnings and endings. Because the children found this book fresh and appealing, they were always keen to return to it to make new connections.

In the final stages of the programme, most of the children enjoyed Ross's witty, satirical illustrations, but some of them found making the deductions quite demanding. The children had reached saturation point with almost seven weeks of fairy tales and, as a result, their interest began to diminish. Furthermore, they were engrossed in the concluding chapters of Wolf (1990)

and were keen to spend any available time discussing the outcomes of Cassy and her family. They were also keen to continue working on their collages which depicted images from their 'Mind's Eye' .

By reading Wolf (1990) and sharing a range of re-worked fairy tales with the children, they were able to see how language works in different contexts in both a novel and picture books. Furthermore, it soon became evident that each book required different levels of reading ability and response. For example, Wolf (1990) challenged some of the children's values and way of life. The lifestyle the squat presents dominated much of their talk as it is very different from their own experience. It did not comfortably mirror their own existence and, as a result, allowed many of them to experience a different lifestyle, that is to step into Cassy's shoes and broaden their understanding of what it is to be human.

The final commentary on my work with the children is set out under the three key elements in the programme, texts, readers and teachers in the last chapter, Conclusions.

CONCLUSIONS

What have been the outcomes of this study? This a difficult question to answer since my findings will be, to some extent, subjective considering the nature of the exercise. Nonetheless, I have found through the close examination of the transcripts, by making references to the children's journals, stories and collages, and by recording their unanswered questions, that the study of the fairy tale - re-worked in the picture book and woven into an apparent realist novel - was an effective approach to teaching how fiction works. Evidence in the transcripts indicates that encounters with such works were conducted so that the children's understanding and appreciation of the choices artists make were enriched and extended. As the programme progressed, the children became increasingly skilled in discovering ways writers/illustrators achieve their purposes, and in so doing they began to develop a rhetoric which added to their powers of attention. Furthermore, I believe that the use of smaller groups and my intervention as a facilitator enabled the children to talk in both a secure and challenging context which positioned them to see themselves differently - as increasingly critics.

The texts

First, I will consider the texts - the picture books of re-worked fairy tales and Wolf (1990). As I have argued in Part One and demonstrated in my work with the children, these books are, to varying degrees, explorations of what it is to create, and by implication to interpret the illusory world of story. They offer the sort of reading experience which can sharpen the reader's eye for how fiction works in that they break the conventions that regularly apply to all fiction. They display what Ommundsen (1993) describes as 'structural incoherence'. Therefore, the books drew the children's attention to the unconventional ways in which they are organised or constructed, some more explicit than others. The metafictional nature of these books enabled the children to learn certain aspects about literature, all of which help children to examine the story-telling process itself. The conscious reflection on these metafictional texts assisted the students to note what are features of all narratives. This consciousness allowed them to see the need for and use a more refined discourse about literature and writing.

The elements and literary patterns which were foregrounded and became the foci of the conversations were:

The use of setting and how it affects meaning; for example, the contemporary setting in Browne's Hansel and Gretel (1981),

The use of symbolic motifs and their metaphorical links to create meaning; for example, the recurring and changing earrings in Snow White in New York (1986),

The interruption of the flow of narrative to allow the 'author' to address readers directly or, alternately, a character from one level of narration may appear in another; for example Jack and Little Red Hen in The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales (1992),

Intertextuality and interpictoriality: the referencing to other works which enriches a reading or viewing; for example, The Frog Prince Continued (1991) and in Wolf (1990),

The nature and style of ending; for example, comparing different endings of 'The Frog Prince', and how they affect meaning,

Lack of closure, a feature which is not found in traditional fairy tales; for example, the 'The Hair and the Rabbit' in The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales (1992),

The weaving of two strands of narrative; for example in Wolf (1992), the dream sequence and the realist story,

Excess of detail; for example the montage in 'The Giant's Story' and the list of insects on the tongue of the Frog Prince,

Gaps or absence; the blank page in The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Stupid Tales (1992), and the 'telling' gap in The Tunnel (1989),

The interplay and interaction of word and image; for example, in Ross's Puss in Boots (1981) and Browne's Hansel and Gretel (1981).

In particular, I found Scieszka's books were useful examples of how explicitly a re-working can be structured, using metafictional features which include 'boundary breaking', 'excess' and 'indeterminacy'. For example, a book like The Frog Prince Continued (1991) enabled the children to see overtly how the rules are working in respect to structure, and to focus on endings as well as linguistic style. Conversely, Ross's pictures on the surface appeared easy to understand, but were actually very demanding because the children were being asked to make deductions from large amounts of detail that led to coherent interpretations or readings of the information depicted. In The Frog Prince Continued (1991), the children, right from the beginning, were alerted to how conventions are being broken. The story begins with 'They lived happily ever after' instead of 'Once upon a time' and the stereotypical roles of the prince and princess are questioned with references and allusions continually being made to other fairy tales. Furthermore, the children soon became engaged in finding the different frog motifs and images which contribute to the story's playful and subversive quality. None of these features are to be found in earlier versions of "The Frog Prince".

The stories and styles of the illustrations in the different re-workings could be compared with earlier versions, given that the familiarity of the subject matter for this particular group of children did not present a problem. However, one of the unexpected outcomes was the number of opportunities the books provided for the readers to develop different ways to achieve narrative closure when speculating on possible endings. This allowed them to note and discuss several possible readings of a passage, a page or a whole work. These possibilities encouraged them to keep returning to both text and pictures to look for hidden clues that might indicate different outcomes, as they did later when reconsidering the ending of Snow White in New York (1986), even though it appeared on the surface to be the archetypal 'happy ever after ending'.

Another significant outcome was the way in which the books allowed the children to explore the conventions of book structure and patterns. For example, how the books are set out, how print text is placed on the page and how pictures and text do different things, but often in very subtle ways. This began to be reflected in the stories the children were publishing because they were beginning to use endpapers to create mood and atmosphere, and to view framing as more than mere decoration. Conscious of the choices available they began to make such choices in creating their own works.

Moreover, the focus on re-worked tales gave the children a renewed interest in the earlier versions, some of which the children read when reading alone. For example, some children were familiar with certain parts of "Puss in Boots" and "Jack and the Beanstalk" but were confused about the endings, or knew only a later, re-worked ending. Hence they were surprised to find the differences as some of them believed the ones they knew to be the only version. Many children discovered classic fairy tales like "Blue Beard", "The Six Swans" and "Jorinda and Joringel" for the first time, and were keen to retell them to the class. This gave rise to further discussion and examination of the tales and their common patterns. This discussion led to and sustained an awareness of the layers of meaning to be expected in the tales.

The 'prime burden' below the surface of the traditional tales appears not to have been lost. In fact many of the re-worked tales gave the children more explicit opportunities to discuss problems and issues related to those people experience in real life, more so, I believe, than in some of the earlier versions. For example, anxiety about the way we look, which emanated from Snow White in New York (1986), was an issue I had not anticipated to become a focus in our conversations. The potential to guide children to think more deeply about the human condition in both the text and the illustrations was also an important part of the study. Many of the books have the features of reflexive writing in a condensed form. They offer explicit signals that things are not what they seem on the surface and, in so doing, give readers, via fiction, to the world. (Ommundsen, 1993) The fact that the ugly duckling in Scieszka's version remains ugly reminds readers that the conventions of fiction may not adequately depict the actual world we live in.

The readers

Extended time for talking about books

In providing increased time for the children to respond to the books through talk, they were able to hear what others think, and to consider various possibilities. The children spent far more time sharing books, as a class and in small groups, than they had done previously. In Term One before I went on leave, I tended to allocate much of the available time to journal writing and expressive activities without allowing time for

developing the children's verbal responses. I had not fully realised the importance of developing their shared interpretations of class books through more focused talk. In Weeks Four and Five when sharing different stories from The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales (1992) the children began to look forward to the 'talking' sessions and would ask to continue when it was time to finish. This gave them further time to reflect or refine their ideas. For example, they enjoyed reading aloud favourite parts from "The Hair and the Rabbit" and arguing as to who might win the race. Such a debate gave the children the opportunity to reflect upon the pun and the open-ended and ambiguous ending without being disappointed by the lack of closure. It was interesting that the more experienced readers quickly became aware that thinking and talking critically about what they were reading or listening to was an expected class activity. This expectation led other children in the class to notice patterns and make connections. For instance, Prue asked if all princesses argue and fight in modern fairy tales.

Sharing puzzles and connections leading to new insights

When time was available some children frequently returned to the text or picture of a particular story to try to justify their ideas, and began to realise, just as I had done at the end of Browne's Hansel and Gretel (1981), that understandings are not always complete when the first reading is finished. They were developing into readers who know about 'readings'. At the most unexpected moments they would alert a friend's or my attention to something in one of the stories, whether it be something Jack was doing in The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales (1992), or a humorous line in Revolting Rhymes (1982). The connections the children were beginning to make gave me the opportunity to push for more rigour in our conversations. For example, previously, I would have congratulated them on their observations and added comments of my own in order to alert them to vital clues. Later, as I became more skilled I began to lead the children to use their initial observations as a starting point to think more deeply about the evidence or clues submerged in the story and, as a result, they often revised their opinions.

For example, I was delighted at the end of the second chapter of Wolf (1990) when Fiona made the "Red Riding Hood" connection in regard to Cassy without any intervention on my part. She was becoming aware of some of the metafictional devices (intertextuality and slippage) Cross had used to

construct her story. During a later reading, Prue alerted the class to the possible reason for Mick's limp, and Kim suddenly realised why there was only a childhood photograph of Mick. These observations were indicative of the way in which the children were noticing clues and becoming more insightful. Moreover, I was intrigued by the on-going debate about who had placed the plastic explosive in the bag, Mick Phelan or his mother. This conversation led Susan's group to reflect upon the character traits of these two characters, both having different motives for hiding the 'yellow lump'. Many times during the reading this question arose but I chose not to intervene, instead I led the children to re-examine the two sets of motives without voicing my own opinion. Given that Year Five were only ten and eleven years of age, they found it difficult to believe Cassy's grandmother would place such a deadly explosive in the bag on purpose, and, thereby, place her granddaughter in jeopardy. They wanted to believe it was placed there accidentally, but as they distanced themselves from the book and became more objective, they knew that Grandma Phelan's actions usually had a definite purpose. From such talk, agreed shared meanings began to emerge, and Susan's strongly held position began to modify.

At the end of Wolf (1990), the whole class was keen to return to their unanswered questions they had recorded earlier in their journals in order to clarify their personal meanings. Most of the children had developed a degree of competence in noticing similarities, differences and incongruities in many of the books. From their repeated readings of and conversations about the more explicit re-workings, they had begun to notice linguistic and narrative patterns in other stories that they were reading, and were keen to incorporate them into their own writing. The children were developing a meta-language which was empowering them to talk about the different structures writers use. They were beginning to read like writers, and thus were becoming more aware of what each writer/illustrator was trying to achieve. They had demonstrated that they were quite capable of participating in conversations while reflecting critically and creatively. They were becoming skilled in questioning, reporting, comparing, judging and speculating.

The transcripts indicate that most of the children did progress from their personal experiences of the books to shared understandings and, increasingly, to an articulating of a more refined language of that experience a wider range of insights and understandings. This was very evident when

I shared The True Story of The 3 Little Pigs! (1989) with both Year Fives since my class, given their intensive interactions with the re-worked fairy tales, were more aware of the nature of the devices Scieszka and Smith had used and were able to articulate their understandings more easily than the other class. Although I shared the book with a larger group, the responses demonstrated that I was achieving what I had set out to do.

The teacher

Implications for my own teaching

Finally from my point of view as, 'mediator', 'orienteer' or 'facilitator', the person who brings the books and the children together to make meaning more explicit, I found there were important implications for my own teaching. What I was really doing was scaffolding the children's talk to enable it to move from spontaneous reporting to conversations where the children played around with ideas, thinking both critically and creatively in order to see how the books were working. There were difficulties associated with my involvement and contributions. Occasionally, for instance, I became too intrusive following my own thought patterns. Sometimes the children simply responded to my questions without posing their own.

At the beginning of the programme I found some of my open-ended questions were not always clear, and, at times, I needed to pose more text-specific questions to ensure that the children would reflect more deeply on the implicit patterns of structure and values in particular stories. This is where I found Chambers' 'Tell Me' questions (Appendix 1) and the children's journal jottings (Appendix 3) useful as ways of opening up their talk. This approach gave me the opportunity to position the children differently in their engagements with the stories in order that the things in the story they did not understand, could be discussed, often in a group situation to negotiate new meaning. For instance, in a further session a smaller group of children spent more time clarifying the ambiguous ending of "The Hair and the Rabbit" and the significance of the clocks. They then suggested ways they would like the story to conclude.

Some of the most insightful conversations occurred when the children wrote down their own unanswered questions related to Wolf (1990), where they had time to think before talking in a group, thus highlighting the important interrelationship between the four modes of language: speaking,

listening, reading and writing. This gave me the opportunity to become aware of how the children were positioned in their engagement with the text before asking them to respond in a group. Nevertheless, I found key children, such as Susan, Annie, Kim and Jane, exerting influence within the group and shaping the responses. Susan, in particular, often modelled her more acute awareness as a reader and speaker.

There were times, too, when I found the situation artificial while using the tape recorder. This created some impediments since I found myself responding to the presence of the recorder and, to some extent, moving the talk too quickly with too many questions in order to complete a reading and discussion in one thirty minute session. However, once I had resolved the difficulty of timing, I gradually began to sharpen my own ability to notice places where the conversation might move from sharing to dialogue, so that it could become more insightful. I became more adept at asking "What parts of the book lead you to believe that?" when trying to follow up after eliciting a yes-no response. My awareness of the children's need to have adequate time to make both personal and group responses, before moving on, grew. For instance, towards the end of the unit Wolf (1990) I again began to direct the children to explore the different motives for the placing of the yellow explosive in Cassy's bag, and how it might relate to the symbolism of the yellow winter aconite. Likewise, we later returned to other titles by Tony Ross so that the children were given further opportunities to reveal their understanding of the gaps in the text, and hence the interplay of the fine detail in the pictures and the text.

Sometimes conversations arose out of other conversations as connections were being made. Such situations made me aware of the importance of allowing time to make use of these opportunities to extend their literary competence. For example, some of the sharing time after silent sustained reading was used as a time for the children to examine the narrative and linguistic structures in the books they had chosen to read. They were encouraged to read aloud a sentence or a paragraph as an indication of why the writer may have chosen particular words or phrase, and to speculate as to why the writer/illustrator may have constructed the book in a certain way. I wanted the children to demonstrate their awareness and acceptance that the text itself was guiding their interpretive activities.

By giving the children the opportunities to use their own questions as starting points in discussion, their reliance on my direction began to diminish. Nonetheless, in my endeavour to foster independence, when the children were talking about particular books, I discovered a conflict of interests. First, I hold that children have to learn to do things for themselves and, second, I hold that there are times when a teacher should intervene to enable them to reflect more critically in order to gain a fuller understanding of what they are reading. Striking a balance, I believe, was the essence of this study since it takes considerable practice and sensitivity to know when and how to intervene, and, just as importantly, when to allow the conversations to flow unchecked. For example, if one intervenes constantly and becomes anxious that children may miss certain aspects of a book, the conversations can become both inhibited and teacher dominated. Thus the children may come to believe the teacher's views are always the 'right ones'.

For instance, in Browne's Hansel and Gretel (1981), I made the decision not to comment immediately on Hansel's odd socks in contrast to the stepmother's obvious 'dressed-up' appearance in order that the children might make the connection during a subsequent re-reading. This connection could be addressed in a further discussion when emotional issues contained in the story were the focus, for example, "How can such a well dressed mother afford to smoke when her children are neglected?"

Planning

In my initial planning I considered using a structuralist approach, like that of Stott (1990), by formally introducing the structures and conventions of traditional fairy tales. I thought it may have been necessary to have children spend some time developing the necessary knowledge and language before introducing an approach which required them to compare and contrast literary elements across the re-worked titles. However, once I commenced working with the children, I soon realised that such an approach would shift the focus away from the actual book to decontextualised literary language itself. Moreover, the re-worked tales which I had chosen did not have predictable plot structures and could not be easily compared to look for consistency with the 'typical' structure. For instance, it was more useful to compare the work of a narrative artist like Tony Ross in a range of his re-worked tales and discuss the relationship between them, rather than compare his work with that of Scieszka and

Smith. Of course, there were times when children would compare language, endings and characters in different versions of the same fairy tale when the need arose.

Subsequently, I labelled the patterns and conventions which arose in the context of each book. I was amazed how quickly the children began to use the meta-language, for example, Kylie's use of 'intertextuality'. Names of literary codes which included perspective, motif, narrative, text, and resolution began to appear more appropriately in their conversations when we talked about the deliberate choices a writer/illustrator had made in constructing his/her story.

Once the programme was under way further decisions had to be made to prevent it from becoming inflexible or monotonous so that there was a balance. The serialisation of Wolf (1990) offered variety to the programme and allowed several children to experience a longer novel which otherwise may have been too complex for them to read individually. On occasions I had to remind myself that books and the children's conversations must not be programme driven since it did not matter if all the pre-planned books were not introduced or given equal time. The children could return to them later, either as a group or individually, thus my omission of Terry Jones's and Michael Foreman's Fairy Tales (1981). The Ahlbergs' books were omitted because they were ones with which most of the children were familiar. Given the children's enthusiasm to spend increased time talking about particular books in the two smaller groups, I found I needed to curtail my plans for introducing new titles. For example, thirty minutes was spent discussing the "The Giant's Story" in The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales (1992). The torn pieces of fairy tales and montage captured the children's imaginations and, in so doing, reinforced the concept of intertextuality. Spending the extra time guiding the children to make such connections was far more valuable in developing their literary understandings and competences than rushing to complete all the pre-planned tales.

Final comment

I believe the way in which the children responded to the approach using the fairy tale - re-worked in the picture book and woven into the contemporary novel Wolf (1990) - provided a bridge between the two different approaches in our junior and senior schools as well as acknowledging the guidelines of

"English - the National Profile". The children, increasingly, were able to articulate what they were thinking in respect to the metafictional features in the stories and, as a result, were able to re-position themselves to become more active or conscious readers. The teacher-posed questions, used as a framework for discussion, gave them the confidence and security to participate in small and large groups, so that they were encouraged to compare their immediate observations in a non-threatening way. I suggest, if this approach were to be continued during Year Six, the less experienced readers in my class may be better prepared to reach and justify individual or group positions when reading and discussing a class novel in their early secondary years rather than accepting the position presented by the teacher. Though this study did not deal directly with writing, I believe I also obtained evidence that the children's capacity to control their writing was extended and they could discuss what they were doing as well as what they were trying to say. This relation of this work to the development of writing is a matter for another study⁵⁶.

⁵⁶This class later produced interesting work in the form of individual works which derived from our shared readings of and reflections on Chris Van Allsburg's The Mysteries of Harris Burdick London: Andersen Press, 1984. This has not been included in this study though I found it exciting and further evidence of the approach I describe here.

APPENDIX 1

Chambers' Framework

from: Chambers, A., Booktalk : occasional writing on literature and children,
London : Bodley Head, 1985, pp 170-173.

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APPENDIX 2

Proposed Plan: Re-worked Fairy Tales 1993

REWORKED FAIRY TALES - Proposed Plan

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Snow White in New York (1986) Fiona French Focus: Setting (modern) Motifs Illustrations (line drawings) Theme - jealousy Layout	Hansel and Gretel (1981) Anthony Browne Focus: Child alone/journey motif Recurring symbols in pictures Incongruities between text and pictures Baba Yaga (1987) Focus: Traditional retelling	The Frog Prince Continued (1991) Jon Scieszka Steve Johnson The Jolly Postman (1986) Janet and Allan Ahlburg Focus: Intertextuality Interpictorality Endings Additional books Princess Smartypants The Frog Who Would be King Focus: Social roles	The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Stupid Tales (1992) Jon Scieszka Lane Smith Focus: Parody - use staff model (dragon-lore) Prelims - cover, title page, end papers etc. Endings Illustrations
Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
Wolf (1980) Gilliam Cross Focus: Parallels Ten in a Bed (1983) Allan Ahlberg Focus: Point of view Role of narrator	The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs (1989) Jon Scieszka Lane Smith Focus: Point of view (text and pictures) Surrealist pictures Wolf continued	Fairy Tales (1981) Terry Jones Michael Foreman Focus: Archetypal patterns Magical objects Revolting Rhymes (1982) Dahl Focus: Rhymes/language Endings Wolf continued	Tony Ross Goldilocks and the Three Bears (1976) Little Red Riding Hood (1978) Jack and the Beanstalk (1980) Puss in Boots (1981) Lazy Jack (1985) Focus: Satire (parody, irony) visual puns Reading and interpreting Illustrations Wolf continued

APPENDIX 3

Children's Journal Entries and Newspaper Reports

These unpublished entries and reports have been removed for copyright or proprietary reasons.

APPENDIX 4

"Cinderella continued"

Susan

This unpublished story has been removed for copyright or proprietary reasons.

APPENDIX 5

Survey for curriculum design and development 1991

CURRICULUM DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT - LITERATURE

1. Write the titles of the books which you read to your class last year beside the appropriate genre. (Some books may fall in several categories. Write it only once).

Adventure

Mystery

Fantasy

Animal fantasy

Animal stories - 'A Horse Called Butterfly'

Folktales

Myths and legends - Parts of The Ramayana. Dang Manik Ka (Vietnamese)

Poetry and short stories - 'Grimble' by Clement Freud & 'Grimble at Christmas'

Australian authors

The Highwayman

Biography

Historical fiction - 'Little Brother' by Akin Ruelle (Australian author)

Science fiction

Issues

'Bridge to Terebithia' by K. Patterson
'The Cay', 'The Great Gilly Hopkins'.

2. What criteria do you use for determining the particular book or category?

1. Integration with Social Studies Theme
2. Anticipated concept level of General Class
3. Likely interest
4. 'Good' literature

3. Which of these books did you feel were most successful?

'Little Brother' / The Highwayman

What evidence do you have for this judgment?

Level of expression in writing, art, drama.

Concentration

interest

Story

Poetry

4. Which of these books lead to further work in language, literature or other areas of the curriculum?

... All : eg. ^{The} Highwayman

List briefly the activities undertaken.

Story - predictions, comic strip re-telling,

Poetry - conveying feelings

Drama - role-play

Art - clay representations of setting, portraits of main characters, plans of area

re-tell story in own words
poem - feelings of Bess / Highwayman
verse-speaking & shadow-play

a poem

costume design

charcoal

drawing

during reading

5. When the children gave a written response to the book, what form did it take? (For example letter, poem, story etc. If there was a mix, indicate the prevalent focus).

Story

6. How do you help the child revisit the book in a more reflective and coherent manner?

Conferencing sections of the story

Role-playing characters in situations 'beyond the book'.

Talking the 'theme' eg (coping with 'grief' in 'Bridge to Terabithia' & 'A Horse Called Butterfly' & discussing the theme as part of S.C.Ed.)

7. At what time of the day do you usually read to the class? How is this determined?

If the story is a stimulus for ~~the~~ writing, then it is ~~read~~ in early morning. If it is purely for enjoyment & discussion, then any time deemed appropriate.

8. How do you cope with time constraints when planning for ways the class can respond to the book?

By talking it in the morning when there are no specialist lessons.

CURRICULUM DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT - LITERATURE

1. Write the titles of the books which you read to your class last year beside the appropriate genre. (Some books may fall in several categories. Write it only once).

Adventure

Mystery

Fantasy

Animal fantasy

Animal stories

Folktales

Myths and legends

Poetry and short stories

Australian authors

Biography

Historical fiction

Science fiction

Issues

Charlotte's Web - EB White
The Paw Thing - Paul Jennings
King Jo of Cog Boat Castle / The Frog who would be king
Pheasant + Lingfisher - Bod Shelf
Short stories - Paul Jennings - Unbelievable
The Jolly Postman - Janet + William Atkinson - Quirky Tales
Paul Jennings, Robin Klein
Boss of the Pool - Robin Klein
Hating Alison Ashley

2. What criteria do you use for determining the particular book or category?

Author studies

Theme integrated

3. Which of these books did you feel were most successful?

Charlotte's Web

Short stories of Paul Jennings

The Jolly Postman

What evidence do you have for this judgment?

Children's response

Work children create afterward in relation to book

Overall feeling

Which of these books lead to further work in language, literature or other areas of the curriculum?

.....
 List briefly the activities undertaken.

Jolly Postman - Integrated with social science Post communication theme. A big book Jolly Postman type book was made to give to the infant school.

Paul Jennings short stories - Drama and story writing.

5. When the children gave a written response to the book, what form did it take? (For example letter, poem, story etc. If there was a mix, indicate the prevalent focus).

Jolly Postman: Verse writing + letter writing.

Paul Jennings - letter to Librarian recommending story writing with a twist at the end.

6. How do you help the child revisit the book in a more reflective and coherent manner?

① - Planned response work.

② The children also have access to reading activity cards ^{with} which they choose 1 to carry out every fortnight. These involve reflective work.

7. At what time of the day do you usually read to the class? How is this determined?

Straight after recess. Brings us together after playtime. Also we do ~~story~~ writers time afterwards and I feel it's a good lead up. Also the kids are fresh again. I don't believe in reading to the class at the end of the day as the children are in 'going home' mode. In writers time we often do response work for literature.

8. How do you cope with time constraints when planning for ways the class can respond to the book?

It's hard! Specialist subjects do interfere i.e. German 2 and music / PE. are all in the block along with literature response.

CURRICULUM DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT - LITERATURE

1. Write the titles of the books which you read to your class last year beside the appropriate genre. (Some books may fall in several categories. Write it only once).

Adventure Monster For Hire

Mystery

Fantasy The Dream Machine, Charlie & the Chocolate Factory, Thrump-O-Moto

Animal fantasy Catwitch

Animal stories

Fairy Folktales The Frog Who Would Be King

Myths and legends

Poetry and short stories George The Giraffe, Snakes & Ladders, Rotbags & Rascals

Australian authors Robin Klein

Biography

Historical fiction

Science fiction

Issues

Author Study Mem Fox, Margaret Mahy

Relationships The Enemies, Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing

2. What criteria do you use for determining the particular book or category?

* Author Study

* Theme Work

* just enjoyable

3. Which of these books did you feel were most successful?

Cat Witch

Thrump-O-Moto

Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing

What evidence do you have for this judgment?

* requests to continue reading, at all times of the day

* enthusiastic resp.

* quality of work in activities

4. Which of these books lead to further work in language, literature or other areas of the curriculum?

.....
List briefly the activities undertaken.

Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing - bk. review

Thrump-O-Moto - writing of own book with borders

- grp prose of chants

- written predictions

- diary of girl's travels.

- haikus (blc of Japanese element)

Catwitch - story map

- continue the story

- look at descriptive passages → writing our own.

- character profiles

5. When the children gave a written response to the book, what form did it take? (For example letter, poem, story etc. If there was a mix, indicate the prevalent focus).

Thump-O-Moto - poem
- dairy.
- prose

Catwitch - continuing a
storyline
- descriptions

6. How do you help the child revisit the book in a more reflective and coherent manner?

recall story outline
decide on fav. characters, why?
predictions (pictures, + story)
oral responses

7. At what time of the day do you usually read to the class? How is this determined?

Novel - at the end of the day
Specific Fowls book - after recess, to enable ch's response
straight away

8. How do you cope with time constraints when planning for ways the class can respond to the book?

It's difficult b/c Tues/Thurs block after recess is interrupted by P.E + Music, but by this time of year, ch's are used to routine.

APPENDIX 6

Story maps and activity sheet: "Baba Yaga" Bookshelf Stage 6

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APPENDIX 7

Full transcripts

TRANSCRIPT 1

Whole class, Jessica interviewing Zoe.

Folk hero elements in Baba Yaga, a Russian folk tale

[Discussion beforehand on how to adapt the questions from the activity sheet.]

1. Jessica: [Has the sheet to guide her.] Does Katrina meet those who have enchanted powers?
2. Zoe: She meets the witch and the cat.
3. Jessica: Does Katrina have companions that are not always human?
5. Zoe: Yes, the dog, the cat and the gate.
6. Jessica: Does Katrina get rescued or win the love of a b..... man?
7. Zoe: No.
8. Jessica: Does Katrina make a trip to or confront the dark world of evil forces?
9. Zoe: Yes she confronts evil forces.
10. Teacher: Give us an example Zoe.
11. Zoe: Oh the witch.
12. Jessica: Does she battle strange creatures?
13. Zoe: No.
14. Teacher: Although there is Bert.....
15. Children: [Children help with pronunciation] Kosshch Bez Smertnyi. She sorts of battles him.
16. Jessica: Does she win out against evil in the end?
17. Zoe: Yes, because of the witch.
18. Jessica: Does she receive a honour of some kind?
19. Zoe: No.
20. Jessica: Does she prove that pain and sorrow must come before joy?
21. Zoe: Yes.
22. Teacher: How Zoe?
23. Annie: [Tape inaudible]Well she had all those terrible things happen to her.

TRANSCRIPT 2

Group 2.

Hansel and Gretel, Anthony Browne

1. Teacher: Remember last week we had The Frog Prince Continued and we talked about transformation tales, when different characters would change into something else and one night for homework you made lists. Can you remember any of them.
2. Susan: The Six swans.
3. Beth: Jorinda and Joringel.
4. Jane: Cinderella.
5. Zoe: Puss in Boots. The lion changes into a mouse.
6. Teacher: We can't really call "Baba Yaga" a transformation tale?
7. Jane: You can the comb changes into the trees.
8. Kylie: The rag changes into the lake.
[Tape inaudible]
9. Teacher: Because Katrina [Baba Yaga] goes on a Journey we could call it a Journey tale..... Today I want to show you Anthony Browne's Hansel and Gretel because this is a Journey tale as well. This retelling, in the text, is the Grimm version. the illustrations are very different. I want you to look out for things which might repeat.
10. Beth: It's sort of modern. I've read it before.
11. Teacher: It is isn't it. We'll talk about the pictures as we go. The cover. [Holds up to compare The Tunnel]
We spent a long time on this book earlier in the year.
What colour does Anthony Browne use to catch your eye?
12. Jane: Red, her coat ...from Red Riding Hood.
13. Teacher: [Turns to title page] There's no red here but what clues does Browne give you about the story? What do you see?
14. Zoe: The cage ...a bird.
15. Teacher: I want you to see if you can notice these motifs when you look at the pictures. [Reads first page.] There is a famine in the land. Do you think there is a famine in the picture? What does a famine mean?
16. Zoe: No food things won't grow.
17. Teacher: How could you interpret a famine in a modern day setting? What would cause the famine for them?
18. Jane: The dad hasn't got any work. He's probably looking for a job in the paper.
19. Kim: The boy is looking down[inaudible]
20. Teacher: What clues in this picture make you think that things aren't going too well for this family?
21. Kylie: Chipped things....[tape inaudible]
22. Beth: They look really sad.
23. Kim: The table cloth is bare and the wallpaper is coming off.
24. Zoe: The ball's red.
25. Teacher: Yes so it is. What do you notice near the ball?
26. Kim: Look Mrs. Bennett it's a doll just like Gretel.
27. Teacher: Yes, I'll turn over now. [Reads text p.2]

28. Kylie: They might be poor because she spends all her money on make-up.
29. Teacher: She obviously likes making herself beautiful.
30. Kim: She's got a string of pearls. [Children try listing all the things on the dressing table including red lipsticks.]
32. Zoe: You can see her in bed. [Tape inaudible.]
33. Teacher: I wonder why Anthony Browne shows views through the mirror.
27. Kylie: He wants to show how poor they are.
28. Kim: Like so he can show you all the things. You sort of get the impression why they're for. You can still see them in the mirror.
29. Teacher: Not only can you see the children, you can also see them closer facing each other. Does it say they were in the same room?
30. Children: No ... Yes. [Children try to decide if there is a wall or not, talk scrambled]
31. Teacher: [Reads next text p.3] What do you notice on this page?
32. Zoe: Her shoes.
33. Teacher: Why is that Zoe?
34. Zoe: They're very bright red.
35. Jane: Another mirror, its on the door.
36. Teacher: I wonder how many mirrors?
[Tape becomes inaudible for a few minutes.]
37. Kylie: It's got a hand on the bottom of the tree trunk.
[Refers to the forest in The Tunnel, compares it to Full Plate p.4]
38. Jane: She's got a cigarette and she's smoking it. I thought they were supposed to be poor.
39. Kylie: She's wearing high-heeled boots!
40. Teacher: Zoe what's the same as the shoes that catches your eye?
41. Zoe: Oh the red coat, Gretel's
42. Kim: And the toadstools too.
[Children try to decide whether it is a cat or a bird on the chimney. Teacher reads Text pp 5,6 and 7]
43. Teacher: I want you to look at the door on both these pages. Tell me what you notice.
44. Kylie: There's a little full moon on the last page and then there is a really big one on this one. Are they gloves on the line?
45. Kim: No, they're power lines.
46. Teacher: I wonder why the light is on. What's happening?
47. Jane: I know he's looking at the pebbles. He can't get out because the stepmother has locked the door.
48. Susan: Hans is behind bars, they are just like the ones we did for the convicts.
49. Teacher: That's right Susan, let's look at this page.
[A few minutes is spent looking at the different bar shapes on the preceding pages] Even the trees behind the house look like metallic bars.[Reads text, p.8]
50. Zoe: It's a pet bird, it's not a cat.[inaudible talk]
51. Teacher: [Reads text, p.9] What colour do you notice again?
52. Susan: The mushrooms, no toadstools.....

53. Children: The red dress, the lollies on the gingerbread house.
54. Teacher: Look at Gretel's red coat and then see how the toadstools form a path. They direct your eyes towards the house. [Reads text p.10]
55. Unidentified voice: The witch is wearing a red brooch. [Teacher reads text pp 10,11]
56. Kylie: There's the cage. The tree trunks are forming bars. [Further talk inaudible]

[Teacher reads text p.12. Children examine images on Full Plate 12. Remainder of text is read]

57. Kim: Mrs. Bennett all the house is very bright.
58. Kylie: But inside the house is all dark.
59. Jane: All the trees have gone.
60. Teacher: What does it mean now that the house is light?
61. Susan: They were all unhappy before and now they're happy.
62. Teacher: It said the stepmother had died. Who had also died in the story?
63. Beth: The witch I think she was the witch. [Further talk inaudible]
64. Teacher: What sort of illustrations would you expect in a "Hansel and Gretel" story? 65. Kylie: Sort of more older.
66. Susan: Older but simpler.
67. Teacher: Simpler, how do you mean?
68. Susan: Well there aren't all the extra bits even though they're sort of got lots of stuff. [Session finishes comparing different versions from display.]

TRANSCRIPT 3

Group 1.

Annie, Mary, Gina, Helen, Fiona, Jenny, Jessica and Prue

The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Stupid Tales

Jon Scieszka Lane Smith

1. Teacher: You all know this book as it has been on the

- display for quite a while. Most of you have looked at it? What does the cover tell you?
2. Annie: Funny kinds of fairy tales?
 3. Mary: The name says stupid, so they might be fairly stupid.
 4. Teacher: What else on the cover tells you what the book might be about?
 5. Fiona: The Stinky Cheese Man?
(other inaudible comments)
 6. Teacher: Looking down the left hand side, it is like a border isn't it.....or a wide margin?
 7. Gina: They sort of tell you what is going to be in the book, don't they?
 8. Teacher: Yes it forms a border or a margin. Looking at these little pictures.....they are quite small.
What indications are there to tell you what might be in the book?
 9. Annie: That one could be Cinderella.
 10. Teacher: Tell me how many stories do you think there are?
 11. Fiona: Seven stories....gosh the number seven.
 12. Teacher: What story do you think The Stinky Cheese Man came from?
 13. Annie: The Ginger Bread Man.
 14. Teacher: Did you already know that?
 15. Annie: No I just did then.
 16. Teacher: There is so much to look at on the front isn't there? The title takes up nearly the whole cover. Is that normally the case?
 17. Mary: Nosome words are very big like stinky, fairly and stupid.
 18. Teacher: Then you've got the stories listed here
a table of contents on the front. Is that normal?
 19. [inaudible responses]
 20. [Fiona reads the list]
 21. Teacher: Can you link one of these pictures here with one of the pictures down the side?
 22. [Group take considerable time to match up story titles with small pictures. [Tape in audible]]
 23. Teacher: Here we have the endpapers. What atmosphere are they creating for you?
 24. Mary: Very smooth and wavy.
 25. Teacher: mm mm waves
 26. Annie: The front cover has lots of dull colours but these are really light.
 27. Teacher: Yes the cover has earthy colours but these are really light.
What kind of waves are they?
 28. Annie: Like dreams
 29. Teacher: Let's look at the back endpapers.
 30. Prue: They don't go all the way across do they?
 31. [inaudible discussion as the end papers are examined.]

Jessica and Annie read aloud the information on the inside flap of the dust jacket ... "New improve10 complete stories 25 lavish paintings ... Brand X"

Children all laugh, somebody says home brand.

32. Teacher: We'll leave the prelims now. We've looked at the cover, endpapers, the advertising.....He's an interesting little fellow. Who's he?
33. Helen: I know him; he's the narrator.
34. Teacher: What does he do?
35. Helen: He tells the story and if something is wrong, he tells them what to do. His name is Jack. He's in "Jack's Bean Problem". [inaudible talk]
36. Gina: [reads title page]
37. Teacher: Goodness, they must think we are a bit daft.
38. Annie: No it's meant for them ... in the book.
39. Fiona: [reads first page of Little Red Hen]
40. Annie: There's a big conversation, they're fighting to see who will be the narrator.
41. Teacher: Who is the author of the book? We have talked about him before.
42. Helen: Jon Scieszka and Jon Smith
43. Teacher: What does Lane Smith do?
44. Helen: Lane Smith is the publisher. [Somebody interjects with illustrator.]
45. Teacher: Who is the publisher? Tell me what you think he does?
46. Mary: [refers to book] Viking. [Children make suggestions, inaudible]
47. Teacher: They make, print, the books and the editor makes a lot of the decisions on how it will look.
Jon Scieszka would have lot of discussion with them and Lane Smith on the layout, size, printI wonder what they would have thought with an endpaper like this with a little argument in the front.
Now who is Jon Scieszka pretending to be in the book?
48. Mary: I think they would say he is clever.
49. Prue: They probably wouldn't be able to stop laughing. Who's this crazy guy.
50. Teacher: Well what normally comes after the title page?
51. [inaudible, somebody says dedication]
52. Jessica: It's upside down. [Mary reads it from Jane's copy]
53. Mary: That's Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith. Jane could put her own name on it.
54. Teacher: Dedication for Jane. That's rather nice ... personal.
55. Teacher: Helen would you like to read the [dedication] page. Look there's Jill up the top of the hill.
56. Helen: He's holding up the whole page [starts to read] "I know I know ..."

- 57. Annie: He does lots of mad things, doesn't he?
- 58. Helen: Jack lives up the hill, F, T. Forest. [Jessica reads introduction.]
- 59. Teacher: Where do you normally see a warning like that?
- 60. [unidentifiable voices] medicine bottles, on smoking, spray cans.
- 61. Teacher: What do you think of Jack?
- 62. [unidentifiable voices] Neat, funny, joking - joking.

"Chicken Licken " in The Stinky Cheese Man

63. Teacher: We'll now have a look at "Chicken Licken". Does he look like your normal chicken? What is different about this chicken?
64. Mary: Two eyes on the side of his head.
65. Fiona: Two horns on one side.
66. Teacher: Would they be horns?
67. Fiona: No beaks and a curly tongue.
68. What else is in the picture that you find a little strange?
69. Annie: Wait - aeroplanes, not birds.
70. Helen: What's this? A 12 . It could be a [inaudible] falling on the board. No 12 o'clock. I think in "Chicken Licken" Jack says the table of contents is falling.
71. Teacher: Look he hasn't used framing. What kind of effect do you think he has tried to achieve without the frame?
72. Annie: I would have given it a border.
73. Teacher: What feeling would a border have given?
74. Helen: More serious, unless the frame had do-dahs and funny things. Frames are not normally for a fairly stupid tale. [Teacher begins to read "Chicken Licken"]
75. Teacher: We've got the text on this page and the illustration opposite on this page. Look at the title "Chicken Licken". Where would we normally find a title printed like that? Fairy tales usually have decorated letters.
76. Mary: A dictionary.
77. Jessica: A poster or an atlas.
78. Teacher: Very true Jessica.
[Teacher continues to read "Chicken Licken". Some children interject to point out that Jack is in the top corner warning them.]
79. Teacher: How is this "Chicken Licken" story different to the original one?
80. Helen: I think he is just playing out in the yard. He is playing under the walnut tree and a walnut falls on his head but he thinks the sky is falling. He tells fox - I mean he tells Goosey Loosey, Ducky Lucky - all the rest and then he tells Foxy Loxy.
81. Teacher: Did the sky fall in?
82. Helen: I think they got eaten by the fox cause ... the fox said they would make take them to the king.
83. Teacher: Oh we didn't have a king in this story.
[Some children call out the president of America.]
84. Mary: Instead of the acorn falling on his head there is a table of contents.
85. Teacher: Some stories change. [Two more versions are retold.] Let's look at the fox here. What do you think?
86. Jenny: He is dressed up as an airman.
87. Annie: No a pilot.
88. Teacher: Does this illustration tell you more than the text? Let's go back.
89. Gina: It says "I know a short cut to the airport".

90. Prue: He's pretending to be a baggage handler, he's carrying the tags for the baggage.
91. Teacher: Let's work out who all the characters are.
[Talk becomes inaudible, then Annie identifies them top to bottom.]
92. Fiona: It seemed they were just outside the airport and then the fox said do you want to know the short cut.
but they're already at the airport.
93. Prue: But remember they are all dumb.
94. Teacher: What is Jack the narrator trying to do?
95. Annie: He's warning them all
96. Teacher: What might he be warning them about apart from the planes
97. Annie: Maybe he knows the sky is about to fall in.
98. Teacher: Yes narrators often know much more than anybody else.
Jack would because he wants to tell all the stories, doesn't he?

TRANSCRIPT 4.

Group 1.

"The Princess and the Bowling Ball " in The Stinky Cheese Man

1. Teacher: Now last time we had "Chicken Licken".
2. Annie: I've read all of this the other day. It's good...excellent. The picture is so funny. She said it just felt as if I was sleeping on a bowling ball.
3. Teacher: Let's look at the picture for a minute.
4. Annie: The mattresses, there are 24 of them. I counted them.
5. Teacher: What else makes you laugh at this picture?
6. Fiona: The funny drawing of the lady.
7. Teacher: What is different about this princess?
8. Fiona: She's ugly; she hasn't got a pretty dress on; her shoes are falling off the bed.
9. Mary: The mattresses are all different fabrics. They're all balancing on the ball.
10. Jessica: She's tried all the different balls even the cherry.
11. Mary: There was meant to be a pea.
12. Prue: Soft ball, orange, apple, cherry pea, football, watermelon. Are you going to read it? Good.
13. Teacher: You really journey it?
14. Prue: Yes. [Teacher reads story]
15. Annie: The prince slipped the bowling ball under because he knew she could feel it.
16. Teacher: Who was telling this story, Jon Scieszka or Jack? [Tape inaudible]
17. Teacher: Were there any times when you felt Jack was speaking directly to you?

18. Annie: Not really but just at the end when he said "thoughnot completely honestly
19. Teacher: What was he trying to say to you?
20. Annie: That's all, fairy tales don't always tell the truth.
21. Teacher: What was he telling you about the prince?
22. Annie: He lies.
23. Teacher: What do we usually think about kings and queens and princes and princesses?
24. Annie: They are always honest.
25. Teacher: Take a close look at the layout - text one page, illustration the other. What particularly takes your eye?
26. Helen: The picture takes up the whole page.
27. Teacher: Anything else?
28. Mary: There are curtains on the stage, a kind of framing.
29. Teacher: Yes indeed. What else on the text page?
30. Prue: The printed name is in blue oh wait it is "Once upon a time" too.
31. Teacher: When does it pick up that colour again?
[Two or three children say "The end" and then check out the other stories to see how they are colour coded.
This leads to a discussion of print size.]
32. Annie: It gets bigger and smaller. The introduction is 14 , this is 16. [Children flip through book naming font size until they get to "Jack's Story"]
33. Annie: I'll show you "Jack's Story".
34. Gina: In one of the stories it goes into newspaper.
35. Annie: I'll show you "Jack and the Bean Story". It goes over the same thing over and over again.
36. Teacher: Like a record getting stuck.
37. Annie: There's this bit here, then it's exactly the same story line.
38. Teacher: I wonder why this is happening in Jack's own story?
39. Mary: Yes he says down there when the giant says tell me a better story. He writes his story again and again - again and again he writes it.
40. Teacher: Like a story in a story. You seem to know this book really well. What is the story after The Bowling Ball.
41. [The children chant "The Really Ugly Duckling"]
42. Teacher: Helen would you like to choose a story?
43. Helen: "The Tortoise and the Hair"
44. Annie: That's good.

"The Rabbit and the Hair " in The Stinky Cheese Man

45. Teacher: [Looking for story] Ah what page? There are no page numbers even though they were in The Table of Contents...I've

- found it. That's such a surreal picture. What makes that picture so surreal - different to what it is? What things shouldn't belong?
46. [unidentifiable voices] The hare has a jumper; the clock - the timing to see how long it takes; the clouds; here's the rabbit
47. Mary: The hair coming out of the hare's head.
48. Annie: All the pictures are kind of all dull ... there not bright and colourful like ...
49. Teacher: Why is it different?
50. Helen: They're stupid tales. I mean it would look funny in bright colours.
51. Annie: It just feels right.
52. Teacher: Do you like the pictures?
53. Annie: Yes.
54. Teacher: What do you like most about the funny characters?
55. Annie: But also the cover is really dull and if the pictures inside were really bright it wouldn't be right because the cover tells you about what is inside.
56. Prue: The tortoise is wearing a hat.
57. Teacher: Looks human.
58. Annie: That clock [Points to one on front cover. Tape becomes inaudible while the group match all the stories with the pictures on the front cover.]
59. Teacher: This is from an Aesop fable, one you all know. Do you know the story Mel?
60. Mary: The hare challenges the tortoise to a race and the hare thinks he could win by heaps and so he stops at trees and has a sleep and things and at the end the tortoise beats him.
61. Teacher: Why did the tortoise beat him?
62. Mary: The hare thought because he was so fast he could stop on the way.
63. Teacher: He underestimated the tortoise.

[Annie while looking at Jane's copy diverts the talk with her discovery that the story of Little Red Hen is woven through the other stories]

64. Annie: Comes in between, the one that's all the way through it.
65. Teacher: These stories are so different - yet ...
66. Annie: Jack always says in one of the stories that all the stories are supposed to start with "Once upon a time"
67. Teacher: He tells you that.
68. Annie: He tells the giant.

[Teacher begins to read "The Tortoise and the Hair"]

69. Teacher: Is there normally a rabbit in the story?
70. Unidentifiable voices: No a hare.
71. Teacher: [Points to title] Oh what spelling do we have up here?
73. Jessica: Oh hair in hair that you grow.
74. Annie: Our hair.

75. Teacher [Continues to read story] "On your mark. Get set Grow!"
[Children laugh on the word "grow"]
76. Teacher: Why would he say grow? [More laughter]
77. Helen: Because the hare had to grow his hair. [The story is continued.]
78. Helen: The hair is coming out from the other side of the head.
Then at the bottom of the next pages. It says knot as in knot of your hair. nyah, nyah, nyah
[The children join in chanting nyah]
79. Teacher: How about Mel, would you read the last page?
80. Mary: Tortoise ran. Rabbit grew. Tortoise ran. Rabbit grew.
81. Teacher: The story like the hair goes on and on and on and on.
82. Fiona: Because they haven't finished yet. At the start it's got the brown and at the end as well.
83. Teacher: I love the Knot here.
84. Jessica: The tortoise's watches are all telling different times.
85. Teacher: Perhaps you could read the times Jessica. [She has some difficulty reading them and the others help her.]
86. Teacher: Is that a normal sort of picture? It reminds me of the sort of pictures you were doing for your lockers. They were surrealist pictures too. They look real in lots of ways but they are too real and we have unusual things positioned. You don't normally see a big fob watch on a tortoise.

[Talk about "nyah" inaudible]
87. Teacher: Who's boasting then?
88. Unidentifiable voices: Hare, no the tortoise, no the hare, it's the rabbit.

TRANSCRIPT 5.

Group 1.

"Little Red Hen " in The Stinky Cheese Man

[Fiona and Helen take turns reading the parts of Little Red Hen and Jack, guided by the red and black print on the first page of "Little Red Hen" on the endpaper.]

1. Teacher: You know the book really well now. Where will you find more of the Little Red Hen?
[Children search, Jessica and Annie read the parts in the middle of the book.]
2. Teacher: Why do you think there is a blank page here?
3. Fiona: It doesn't say anything so you just turn the page.
4. Annie: The blank page belongs to the other story.
[Jessica reads what Jack says at the bottom of "Little Red Running Shorts"]
5. Jessica: "Wait. You can't do this

Your story is supposed
to be three pages long.
What do I do when we
turn the page?"

6. Teacher: Now I'm a little bit confused. Who is the narrator in this book?
7. Helen: Jack
8. Mary: "Where is that lazy narrator?
Where is that lazy illustrator?
Where is that lazy author?"
- [Tape inaudible, children define the roles]
9. What role does the "Little Red Hen" play in this book?
10. Mary: Just a character in the book.
11. Teacher: Who is being her character? Illustrator, author or Jack?
12. Unidentified voices: Jack. No. The author.
13. Teacher: I guess what the author is doing is intruding, isn't he? The author is getting the Little Red Hen to say where is[Children recite her lines spontaneously]
14. Teacher: Why is Little Red Hen asking these questions?
15. Mary: Because she hasn't got a spot in the book yet.
16. Teacher: Yes she is having great difficulty. [Children search for more of "Little Red Hen"]
17. Teacher: Who does help her eat the bread?
18. Annie: The giant.
19. Teacher: What does it say Gina?
20. Gina: "Eat says the giant"
21. Teacher: What happens?
22. Annie: [Loud gasp] He has the hen.
23. Helen: He has a chicken sandwich.[Laughter]
24. Teacher: How do you know it is a chicken sandwich?
25. Helen: Feathers ... because the feathers and legs are sticking out.
26. Fiona: [Tape inaudible] Jack would want to escape.
27. Teacher: What characters in the book chase Jack?
28. Mary: The giant
29. Teacher: Which story does he come from?
30. Helen: Jack in the Beanstalk.
31. Annie: In the story just before this one or something it is "Just time for my story, the best story.
32. Teacher: Did we have a story of Jack?
33. Annie: "Jack's Story"
34. Jessica: "Jack's Bean Problem"
35. Annie: It was way back here. [Children. search for stories.]

TRANSCRIPT 6.

Group 2.

Jane, Kylie, Zoe, Susan, Beth, Kim,

The Stinky Cheese Man

1. Teacher: What do you notice about the title or heading?
2. Kylie: The same colour as the "Once upon a time" bit.
3. Jane: And the end if we ever get to the end.
[Susan begins reads the first page of the story.]
4. Teacher: Before we turn over, what is different about this page to all the others?
5. Kylie: It has a picture in the middle. It's a little house in the middle of the forest. [She looks to the picture on the facing page] Look at the Stinky Cheese Man, a piece of cheese has been cut out of him.
6. Teacher: Just for a minute look at the house and the way Lane Smith has done it.
7. Kylie: The trees make the house look far away.
8. Teacher: How has he used the trunk of the trees? The perspective is most unusual.
9. Kylie: Like a border thing.
10. Kim: Or an arch.
11. Teacher: That house is really tiny. What technique has he used to make you focus on it.
12. Susan: The light sky in the shape of the house. It's very light compared to the forest.
13. Teacher: Point to where your eye comes to first, and then where does your eye go? [Tape inaudible] Yes, if that was all dark forest, you would hardly see that little house. Any more comments about the way it has been illustrated before I turn over.
14. Kim: I can see the Stinky Cheese Man ... in the oven because all the fire is around him.
15. Kylie: You don't put cheese in the oven, it would melt.
16. Beth: It's stinky cheese maybe it's hard.
17. Teacher: You would think it would run all out of shape. What kind of cheese does it remind you of?
18. Jane: I know. I think it is brie or camembert.
19. Teacher: Soft cheeses.... We'll turn over. I hadn't noticed the fire there before . Every time I look at it I see something new. Right Susan. Before we begin reading what's happened to the text on these two pages?
20. Zoe: There's only half a page of text.
21. Jane: He's melting, the page has started to melt.
22. Kylie: Here's the lady and man and they've been knocked over by the Stinky Cheese Man.
23. Kim: It says one page and half a page.
24. Teacher: What's disappeared here in the middle?
25. Children together: The gutter.
26. Teacher: Why are these curves here?
27. Kylie: He's melting and making a stink.
[Susan continues to read. Session finishes.]

The Jack Stories in The Stinky Cheese Man

[The talk begins with "Jack's Story". Kylie reads it.]

28. Zoe: It doesn't finish itself. I think it might be getting smaller and smaller because he says it so many times. They're losing their voice. They can't talk as loudly.
30. Jane: Who is telling the story?
31. Kylie: Jack.
32. Teacher: Let's go back to "Jack's Bean Problem".
33. Jane: Look at the font. The giant is treading on "forget" making it smaller. When he squeezed Jack ...
[Jane whispers the words of the tiny font at the top of the page.]
34. Zoe: Because its Jack's bean problem and he doesn't like the giant interfering and then I think its the giant's story and then it's Jack's. They're all to do with it. [Jane then reads all of "Jack's Bean Problem".]
35. Teacher: So the giant is speaking in upper case letters. [Kylie points to them.]
36. Kylie: The giant looks as though he is chopping up Jack's book.
37. Beth: He is cutting it up and then sticking it up together again on the next page.
38. Kylie: It is his story.
39. Teacher: He is changing the stories. Let's check the illustrations.

[Children try to read the print on the tiny fairy tale books at the base of the giant's beanstalk.]

40. Teacher: We'll turn over now.....I love this one because it is a montage of all the fairy stories.
This page has got all the sayings from the fairy stories.
[Beth reads "The Giant's Story".]
41. Kim: [Points to montage] Can we show you every one.
42. Jane: The rose from Beauty and the Beast.
43. Kim: There's a bean up there; then the poisoned apple from Snow White; a boat from Noah's Ark; the pie with the magpie in it.
44. Teacher: Remember how Susan wrote her story of "Cinderella Continued"?....Susan what did you do with all your stories?
45. Susan: Mixed them all up.
46. Teacher: That's exactly what the giant has done here.
Was it really the giant who mixed them up?
47. Kylie: Jack.....oh no Jon Scieszka wrote them.
48. Kim: There's the Ginger Bread Man; the glass slipper and the black cat; a little cottage; there's the golden egg as well from the hen; the witch.
49. Kylie: The wolf; the seven dwarfs. [Other children join in.]
50. Teacher: What was the word we used before when we mixed up fairy tales?
51. Kylie: Inter...tex...ualty.

52. Teacher: Yes intertextuality.
[Children continue to talk about the montage.]

"The Other Frog Prince " in The Stinky Cheese Man

53. Kim: [Reads story aloud, children laugh at the end]
54. Kylie: There's the little white things.....Oh yeah.
55. Zoe: The crown because the giant might have cut it out.
56. Unidentified voices: That's the weed; he's got a huge head; there's the teeth; the tongue.
57. Kim: He looks as though he is pulling down the thing [title] in his tongue.
58. Teacher: Of course the label. He is so clever. What sort of things would you find in a traditional fairy tale, a real Frog Prince?
59. Kim: The crown and that matches up with things from the giant's story.
60. Teacher: What is very different about the illustration?
61. Jane: His big tongue but you'd find a lily pad in a traditional one.
62. Kylie: The Frog Prince has got bits cut out like the Stinky Cheese man.
63. Teacher: have a look at those teeth again.
64. Kylie: Yeah, that's what I said.[Refers to white dots.]
65. Kim: Can I have a look at the next pageno it's a different story, "Little Red Running Shorts".
66. Teacher: Why is this illustration different to one you'd find in a traditional story book?
67. Unidentified voices: A science book; or a dictionary; no its a project.
68. Teacher: It's almost like pulling this out of a file.
[pointing to tab] pulling that out, [pointing to mouth] undoing the zip. You know how we talked about Latin names in our birds? Would you read the scientific names? [Children play with the names trying to pronounce them.]
69. Jane: They all look if they are cut out of an encyclopaedia.
70. Kim: It doesn't show anything of the princess ...but there's just a daisy , just one.
71. Kylie: Do you reckon that would be weed?
72. Teacher: What do you think?
73. Kylie: Because there's weed all the way around.
74. Kim: Can I read the end again? [Reads aloud.]
75. Teacher: How did the story vary from The Frog Prince Continued? They have the same author.
76. Kim: He was just kind of kidding, he didn't really want to be turned into a prince, neither did the other one he wanted to be a frog for ever and ever.
77. Teacher: Why do you think he was kidding?
78. Zoe: He just like being kissed.

TRANSCRIPT 7

Whole Class 14 girls

Images from Wolf Gillian Cross

[Children write down quickly the images that come into their minds at the end of the story.]

1. Beth: Wolf, squat, plastic yellow explosive, mac, Nan, suitcase.
2. Prue: Wolf, yellow explosive, Nan, Goldie, Cassy, Lyall, Robert, squat, fish and chips, Moongazer, telephone box, Mick.
3. Jenny: Wolf, plastic explosive, Red Riding Hood, werewolf.
4. Annie: Squat, wolf, door, knock, mask, postcard, telephone box.
5. Jessica: Fierce wolf, funny, house, Nan, yellow, telephone, bacon, forest, fairy tale.
6. Fiona: Fish and chips, Cray Hill bomber, wolf squat, house, yellow lump, house, tap, Mother, Nan, phone, Cassy, tap, tap, tap, tap.
7. Mary: Wolf, funny anxious, scared, bomb, Mick, squat, three, seven, fairy tale, mac, Nan, Cassy, yellow lump.
8. Kylie: Yellow lump, wolf squat, Goldie, Robert, Moongazer, blanket, note, mirror, mask school.
9. Kim: Wolf, fairy tale, scream, squat, Nan interfering, scissors, room, mirror, yellow lump, bomb van, dream.
10. Susan: Wolf, squat, dream, woods, black, time, scream, yellow lump, Cassy, bomb.
11. Gina: Wolf, fish and chips, knife and fork, plastic explosive, and ... cement blocking up the toilet.
12. Jane: Nan, wolf, Cassy, squat, pine trees, Mick, explosive, yellow, fuse, scared, Red Riding Hood, Moongazer, mac, flat, fish and chips, knife and fork, flat, sandwiches, bomb, I.R.A.
13. Annie: I've got another one. It's what I thought Mick had on all the time, ... a chequered shirt. [More talk]
14. Prue: The yellow flowers.
15. Teacher: The winter aconite. [More talk] What clues did you get throughout the story on how the ending might be resolved. I noticed you were putting the clues together one by one as we progressed.
16. Kylie: The 24 hours and Nan would be dead.
17. Teacher: Your prediction.
18. Jessica: I thought the Cray Hill bomber.
19. Teacher: Your first clue
20. Gina: When every thing was parallel in her room, in straight lines. I thought Mick would come and get her.
21. Teacher: You really thought Mick had taken the explosive. Did anybody think that Goldie had actually taken it? Yes. What was the clue?
22. Kylie: The elastoplast. [Children. talk to each other.]
23. Annie: The way she was acting when she got home.

TRANSCRIPT 8

Whole Class
Wolf Gillian Cross

Unanswered questions from journals

1. Teacher: I really journey looking at your Journals and the sorts of questions you asked. Prue you brought up something no one else had mentioned. You brought up about Mick's limp. ... Prue made a suggestion how he got his limp. How do you think he may have got it?
2. Beth: When he was fighting he got hurt.
3. Mary: He was a hunch back as well.
4. Teacher: Obviously he had been injured because of the fighting he does. A lot of people asked this question, How did Mick get the yellow lump in the first place?
[Jane inaudible.]
5. Susan: Like Jane said maybe he had a part that he had to pass on to somebody else so it could be made ...
6. Teacher: Because these bombs take some making. They usually do them in a back room or in some one's house. They have to hide to do it.
7. Beth: The back room of Nan's house.
8. Susan: Nan's back bedroom.
9. Teacher: Do you think Nan would allow bombs to be made in her back room? Remember how fussy she is.
10. Kim: Maybe he threatened her ...[inaudible]
11. Teacher: A possibility isn't it?
The next question which came up, how did the lump get into Cassy's bag? None of us could make a decision on that before. There's probably no one right answer.
12. Jane: I think Nan put it in there because she [inaudible]
13. Kim: Nan put it in there so Mick wouldn't find it.
14. Jane: That's why he came back to get it when Nan said she didn't have it.
15. Kylie: He saw the postcard.
16. Teacher: Why didn't Nan want Mick to have the yellow lump?
17. Jessica: She thought it would be dangerous.
18. Jane: She doesn't like violence.
19. Helen: If that was right why did she give it to Cassy?
20. Teacher: That's a very good question. Why did she?
21. Jane: That's why I thought it might have been put in though.
22. Susan: Maybe when they [Nan and Mick] came in the dark ... accident.
23. Teacher: You still think it got in accidentally?
24. Several children.: Yes.
25. Teacher: If it didn't get in accidentally why didn't Nan want the yellow lump out of her flat?
26. Kim: She didn't like it.
27. Teacher: If it had got in accidentally how would Mick

known Cassy had it? Why would he write the note to her?
This raises 2 questions, Why did Nan want it out of the flat? and Why did she decide Cassy was the person who had to take it?

28. Susan: Nan might have taken it when Mick was asleep. She wouldn't know where to put it when he woke up so it could have been shoved into the bag.
29. Kylie: She could have shoved it anywhere.
30. Susan: It could have got shoved in the bag but not completely ... by accident but Nan could have got scared.
31. Teacher: What was wrong with Nan just finding a cupboard or somewhere in the flat to hide it?
[Children talk excitedly.]
32. Susan: She could have got really scared like
33. Teacher: Nan is such a well organised, fussy person. Would that be typical of Nan's behaviour?
34. Susan: No, she is a fussy individual. But she couldn't be like that all the time.
35. Helen: Was Mick just chasing after ... not Goldie but Cassy's Grandma or was he chasing after the whole family?
36. Kylie: Just the yellow stuff.
37. Teacher: The explosive was what he wanted. He knew if he took Nan prisoner, that Cassy would be forced back. That was a threat to get Cassy back with it.
38. Helen: Ah I was a bit confused in that part.
39. Kim: Susan could be right because if you're got something you shouldn't have and some one's coming up the stairs, you just put it anywhere.
40. Jane: If you get scared you sort of get paralysed.
41. Prue: She could have put it in Cassy's bag because Mick wouldn't have thought that she would have given it to Cassy and put her in danger, so Mick wouldn't know.
42. Teacher: I think that is quite a good point, a possibility. We never really know the real reason. We have to work it out for ourselves.
43. Teacher: How does the note and the dream link? Susan has asked this question and so have other people.
44. Jane: Because she's like little Red Riding Hood in her dream and the letter is addressed to Little Red Riding Hood. [Talk inaudible.]
45. Teacher: How does he know?
46. Children: [Inaudible] The mac is blue.
47. Teacher: She's been having the dream of being Little Red Riding Hood. When the note was on the car to whom was it addressed?
48. Children: Catherine Phelan.
49. Teacher: So that's how she knew the note was for her. Her name was on the outside. When she opened it, it said, "Dear Little Red Riding Hood". That's the name that he had given her.
50. Gina: When she was a baby was she with Goldie and Mick when she was a baby. Well when she had the dreams then and then when

Mick was around again she had the dream. Mick could have known she had the dream.

51. Teacher: How would Mick know. Does your father know what you dream? [No] A good point to bring up. Fiona, you brought up something really good in your journal what I thought was good and I'd like to talk about it for a moment. You said the name of the book. means a lot to the story. Could you expand on that a little.
52. Fiona: Because Wolf the book is all about wolves and Mick is involved with wolves
53. Teacher: You have me talk about the word, metaphor, before. The name of the book Wolf is really a metaphor for the whole story ... What does a wolf mean to you ?
54. Mary: Howling and scared.
55. Helen: Fierce
56. Susan: Werewolves [Other children agree.]
57. Teacher: If you were near a wolf what do you think it might do to you?
58. Kim: Scare me.
59. Mary: Might hurt you.
60. Think of some of the stories you know with wolves in them.
61. Jane: "White Fang" It's a movie. [Children join in and decide it was not harmful.]
62. Susan: When you read the story ["Wolf"] it kind of makes you think that wolves are like that but then if I hadn't read the book I wouldn't have thought it would be like that because of "The Jungle" books. Most of the books I've read, they're really nice wolves and that. They look after people.

TRANSCRIPT 9

Whole class

Wolf Gillian Cross

1. Teacher: First of all I want to ask you what the story was about.
2. Fiona: It was about a little girl called Cassy who lived with her gran who sent her away and she went to live with her mother called Goldie. She went to the place she used to live and she had moved and now she ..

3. Teacher: Thank you Fiona. Do you think anybody could put the idea of the story into 3 or 4 sentences, without telling everything that happened.
4. Prue: And she went to her mother who was living with Lyall, he was a sort of a husband, no a boyfriend. He had a son called Robert. Cassy and Robert liked each other and they were in a squat.
5. Teacher: Thank you Prue, you are doing a really good job. If somebody asked you to write a blurb for the back of the book, what would you write?
6. Kim: Cassy's gone to live with her mother. Her nan didn't want her and she doesn't know what's going on. A man keeps on coming to get into her mother's house.

[Children go off to write their own blurbs and then return to share them.]

7. Prue: [Reads] Cassy's Nan sends her away to stay with Goldie, her mother in a squat. Cassy's father went away when she was a baby. A man keeps on trying to get into the house to get the yellow explosive back. He holds up Nan and in the end Goldie calls the police. He goes to gaol and he was in the I.R.A.
8. Fiona: In the story Wolf, Cassy lived with her Nan and was sent to live with her Mum. Her Dad is the Cray Hill Bomber and Cassy has the yellow lump and has to give it back or her Nan will die.
9. Annie: A girl called Cassy lived with her Nan but her Nan sent her away to live with her Mum. Then her Dad comes who she has never seen before and haunts her because she has something very important.
10. Teacher: I liked the way you used that word "haunt".
[Beth reads hers but it is inaudible in parts She mentions the 24 hour deadline.]
11. Susan: Cassy goes to stay with her mother and Lyall in London. Mick, her father, who she has not known is in the I.R.A. By accident Cassy gets the plastic explosive and Mick wants it back. On her own Cassy travels to her Nan's flat but she does not have the explosive. Goldie her mother brings it and rescues her. Nan was kidnapped but she is all right in the end.
12. Teacher: Close your eyes really tightly. I want you to think of any feeling you felt while I was reading the story. [Children spend a few minutes making jottings on their pads to help them think.]
13. Mary: I was anxious to know what happened with her father.
14. Teacher: How did you feel about that?
15. Mary: Funny feelings in my tummy.
16. Annie: I had a funny feeling in my tummy when the nan was all hooked up in the bath and when her hands were tied to the taps.
17. Prue: I was anxious at the end because I didn't know what was going to happen to Nan or whether she would get there in 24 hours.
18. Gina: I felt sorry for Cassy when her Nan sent her away.

[Susan and Jane inaudible.]

19. Beth: I felt annoyed when Lyall kept cracking Jokes.
20. Teacher: He wasn't taking her seriously at all.
21. Fiona: I felt scared when the wolf mask had the yellow explosive in it.
22. Teacher: Why?
23. Fiona: Because it might have blown up.
24. Teacher: It needed a detonator to make it explode. It couldn't go off by itself.
25. Jessica: I felt sorry for Cassy whenend..[Inaudible]
26. Teacher: What about at the end when she was screaming in the school. How were you feeling then?
27. Prue: I felt sorry for Cassy and I was embarrassed when she stopped screaming. No one knew what to do.
28. Teacher: When you get so emotional you get past the stage of thinking of what other people think because you get welled up inside.
29. Jane: I was anxious to know what Mick was going to do in the flat.
30. Teacher: We had no idea what he was doing to Nan in the flat, did we? It is incredible to imagine that somebody would tie up their own mother.
31. Fiona: I was worried if she died where would Cassy go?
[The last part inaudible.]
32. Teacher: I don't think the Nan would have been much older than me, perhaps 10 years. I think Goldie and Mick were fairly young when they got married. She's not an old, old lady because she's still working; she's
a nurse. [More talk about her age.]
[Teacher asks for any unanswered questions.]
33. Prue: What happened at the end when ... did she go to her mother or Nan or somewhere else?
34. Jane: Cassy might have gone to live with Goldie until Nan got better or the next door neighbour Mrs. Ram....might look after Cassy.
35. Teacher: What sort of person did you gather Mrs. Rammage to be?
36. Jane: Older ...
37. Jessica: Would Goldie and Lyall and Robert leave the squat and go and live with Nan?
38. Teacher: Do you think it would work out at Nan's with Goldie and Lyall and Robert living at the flat? [No]
Why not?
39. Susan: Because they're different. Nan's all fussy, particular, I mean.
40. Teacher: Whereas they have a completely different lifestyle. [Talk about squat - camping]
41. Annie: What sort of time is it set, today or ...?
42. Prue: Probably today ... because they had police and trains. They had stoves and fish and chips.
43. Teacher: What makes you think it wouldn't be set in the nineties?
44. Jane: It would be set not in the nineties, the eighties I reckon.
[Inaudible talk - arguing about when it was set]

45. Annie: 1988 or 1989.
46. Teacher: Are there any clues in the story that would give us an idea of the actual time?
47. Fiona: I think it was about 10 years ago or 20 because they had squats then.
48. Jane: They didn't have a bath.
49. Teacher: A bathroom that is working. [Talk about trains and subways] Are we all agreed that it is set in the last few years? [Yes.]
50. Gina: Would Cassy still go and visit Goldie and Lyall?
51. Susan: I'll think she'll go back to her grandmother's but she'll go and visit Goldie in the holidays or something.
52. Kylie: Mrs. Bennett because Mick's gone Gramma won't send her away any more ... because he's in gaol.
53. Teacher: That's true.
54. Jane: I want Lyall and Goldie to get married. [Children call yes.]
55. Prue: I'd like there to be wolf too [Wolf Two]
56. Teacher: What kind of wolf? A real wolf?
57. Prue: No! Just Wolf Two, the book.
58. Teacher: You would like there to be a sequel. I see.
[Children all agree.]
59. Jane: Mick gets out of gaol. [Some children shout "No"]
60. Teacher: How long do you think Mick might go to gaol for?
61. Children: 10 years, a life time, a couple of years until she's grown up.
62. Gina: I want to know what subjects she got in school because she didn't get to choose.
63. Annie: I felt sorry for her when she couldn't get to do that.
64. Teacher: Do you think she'll go back to school? [Yes]
How do you think it is going to affect her for the next year or so?
65. Kim: [Was away for the last chapter.] Maybe she won't be so fussy ... she wants to use a knife and fork. Maybe she'll be more quieter.
66. Teacher: Fussy about what?
67. Kim: Like she didn't really like the lifestyle. She wanted to eat with a knife and fork.
68. Jane: That [the experience] might have brought Goldie and Nan closer together. [Inaudible talk]
69. Does she still have the dreams? Will she still have the dreams or are they over now?
70. Teacher: What do you think Annie?
71. Jane: They might get better and then the woodcutter comes into her dream.
72. Annie: Instead of nightmares, she'll have dreams.
73. Teacher: Do you think the dreams will stop or continue.?
74. Susan: I'll think she'll have one or two more dreams and that will resolve it. They will be the only dreams.
75. Teacher: What kind of resolution do you think? Could you expand on that.
76. Susan: Probably she'll get rescued by the woodcutter.

77. Teacher: Who would you like to be Cassy's woodcutter?
78. Unidentified voice: Lyall.
79. Jane: I think Goldie was the woodcutter because Goldie sort of rescued her.
80. Teacher: She was actually the woodcutter wasn't she?
[Laughter]
81. Jane: I thought it was going to be Lyall.
82. Teacher: When it started to get complicated how many of you thought Lyall was the wolf in the story?
[A few nods of agreement.]
83. Jane: Because he had a wolf mask on in the story.
84. Annie: Yes in the little part when the wolf mask was there.
85. Teacher: Does anybody think that Lyall was going to do something awful to Cassy?
86. Prue: He might have kept on scaring her with the masks.
87. Teacher: Why would he want to do that?
88. Kylie: Because he's funny he liked to make people laugh.
89. Teacher: One person when I was reading it said is Lyall black? Did other people realise he was black?
90. Annie: For the first bit I didn't think he was. I thought he had bald hair. Then I realised he was.
91. Beth: I thought he was black.
92. Helen: I thought Robert was white.
93. Zoe: I thought Lyall was white. [Inaudible talk]
94. Teacher: Any more unanswered questions?
95. Mary: What happened to the yellow lump after it fell ... ?
96. Kylie: Well someone else might have found it on the bottom floor or something and might have taken it
...done something with it.
97. Teacher: Who were the other people on the scene when it was thrown?
98. Beth: The policeman or Goldie or Robert.
99. Kylie: Or Mrs. Rammage could have found it.
100. Teacher: The police would be wanting it ...wouldn't they? Why would the police need that yellow lump?
101. Fiona: So that they could prove that it was him that did it.
102. Jessica: Also Mick might have stolen it.
103. Teacher: Why did they need the yellow lump for evidence?
104. Gina: They could get it to bomb up the I.R.A.
105. Teacher: Whose that Gina?
106. Gina: The police.
107. Teacher: The police don't fight them. hey try to capture them. Over in Ireland the Protestants, the other people they're fighting, possibly would do that.
The police are mainly interested in catching them.
108. Jane: I want to know if Cassy had any choice in her name?
[Children have a discussion of Catherine, Caitlan and Cassy.]
109. Prue: Is it Goldie's real name?
110. Teacher: What do you think?

111. Prue: It said didn't it.
112. Teacher: Why has Gillian Cross used the name Goldie?
113. Prue: Because of Goldilocks.
114. Teacher: What are some of the things you told me before that remind you of Goldilocks?
115. Annie: They said she has long golden hair.
116. Kylie: Something else that reminds me of Little Red Riding Hood. "Hello Little Red Riding Hood"
117. Jane: Mick says, ... from The Big Bad Wolf.
118. Susan: You know how she puts the yellow lump on the back of the photo. Well when it ... would prove that he actually did it.
119. Teacher: Who actually threw it Goldie or Cassy?
120. Children: Cassy
121. Teacher: And smashing the photo too is like ... What do you think Cassy is symbolically doing by throwing the photo of her Dad together with the yellow lump ... explosive. What meaning has that got for anybody?
122. Jane: Shutting out to her Dad "It's not my Dad any more".
123. Kylie: Blocking him out.
124. Gina: Why did Gillian Cross choose to do the fairy tale in the story?
125. Jane: Because she wanted to make it different to a lot of other stories.
126. Teacher: Who would like to add to that?
127. Susan: Its sort of about two different things, the wolf and the yellow lump. How does the wolf end in the story? What happened to the wolf in the Red Riding Hood story you know?
128. Susan: He was killed.
129. Teacher: So instead ... In our story what happened to the wolf?
130. Jane: He got taken to gaol ... When Cassy went ...[When she got his note] realised what had happened she imagined Mick with his teeth at Nan's throat. I got scared then.
131. Teacher: ... you felt frightened. What Gillian Cross has done, she has tried to have what is happening in the real story to happen in the fairy tale. That helps you understand the real story by looking at the parallels, the same things. Also if we can come back to the wolf, what sort of feelings does a wolf always give you?
132. Children: Scared, ...frightened, ...an uneasy feeling.
133. Teacher: You said that well. Those dream sequences with the Red Riding Hood story. Why do you think Gillian Cross had those at the end of every second chapter? What was that telling us about Cassy?
134. Children: Uneasiness.
135. Teacher: A darkness?
136. Mary: Going back to the yellow lump. What would have happened if ... The police could have taken it and maybe Mick got it off the shelf and he had the other thing to make it explode. He could have used it at the police station to get away.
137. Teacher: Would that happen in real life? [No]
138. Prue: It wouldn't explode would it?

139. Teacher: Think about this question before you answer it. Obviously your fathers aren't people who go round shooting people or ...
[Laughter] Now think of the parts of the story ... Is there anything in your own lives that has happened to you. You might not want to tell me ... While I was reading that story what made you think of things in your own life or something you've read?
140. Jessica: When she screamed in the [school] hall ...
141. Teacher: When have you wanted to scream like that?
142. Jessica: When she had her head ...
143. Annie: When she knew somebody had been in her room.
Like, no ...probably just my mum or something.
144. Teacher: That's what I was meaning "Somebody's been at my things" the same feelings. [Children tell of experiences.]
[Session finishes.]

TRANSCRIPT 10

Annie, Teacher

Lazy Jack *Tony Ross*

1. Teacher: I see you have chosen Lazy Jack. Would you first tell me what the story is about.
2. Annie: Well first it's about a princess who was really sad. She never never knew how to smile and
Then there's Lazy Jack who let his mother do all the work and then his mum went mad at him. he just went to work at all these places and what he got at the end of the day he carried in his pocket
[Tape inaudible]
3. Teacher: He was foolish was he?
4. Annie: Yes and then one day he was carrying a donkey on his back. This is the ... bit of the story when he looked up at the princess and she laughed. [Inaudible]
5. Teacher: Did he get a fortune at all?
6. Annie: He got to be a prince.
7. Teacher: Like in a lot of folk tales the foolish silly person gets the fortune. Did you find the story funny?
8. Annie: Yes.

[Teacher reads "Once a boy, called Jack lived with his mother. Jack was probably the laziest person in the whole world,] Is the way most tales begin?

9. Annie: Not really, it's sort of funny. Jack was probably the laziest person in the whole world.
10. Annie: [Turns to the text before title page. Reads]
11. Teacher: In the beginning what is it about the illustrations which make it humorous?
12. Annie: Well Jack. Jack's mother carrying all the logs and Jack is just sitting there doing nothing.
13. Teacher: What problem did Jack have?
14. Well when Jack did work he got his money and dropped it. [Tape inaudible] She gets mad tells him to carry it in his pocket. The milk went right through.
15. Teacher: He took all she said literally. What are some of the funny things you can see in the illustrations?.....Does Jack look like a normal little boy?
16. Annie: A bit fat, he looks fatter but he's got little He's got a really shape.
17. Teacher: Yes odd. He's got skinny little legs. Where would you normally see these characters drawn?
18. Annie: In kind of cartoons.
19. Teacher: What's Tony Ross used to make these drawings?
20. Annie: What's he done it with?
21. Teacher: What's he used?
22. Annie: Water colour.
23. Teacher: Let's look at some of the expressions on the faces.
24. Annie: [Inaudible] but he's still smiling.
[Turn several pages, comments made]
25. Teacher: He is a silly boy. Do you think if this story was told with normal illustrations it would have been as funny? [No] Let's have a look at the layout of the book. What about the framing here?
26. Annie: It's just white. This one has just hasn't got a frame.
27. Teacher: I wonder why?
28. Annie: To make it join.
30. Teacher: Here too, it is bleeding into the frame.
I wonder why he has something [cake crumbs] coming out of the frame?
31. Annie: It draws your eye.
[Go backwards and forwards looking at the framing]
32. Teacher: Look at these lines. [Scratches on cat's face]
33. Annie: They're scratch marks.
34. Teacher: This sort of line work.
35. Annie: It's cross hatching.
36. Teacher: What do those lines do when you look at that picture?
37. Annie: They kind of draw your eyes to them.
38. Teacher: Definitely, especially the colour and the lines.

TRANSCRIPT 11

Group 1

Puss in Boots Tony Ross

1. Teacher: Tony Ross is different to Jon Scieszka, and it is not a big book. That's why we have to get in really close. One of the reasons I want to share his books with you is that he retells fairy tales. He keeps to the tale but it is the way he does the illustrations which are different. He is very clever.
Does anybody know the story?
2. Jessica: There was an old miller. He sent his daughter to the king and ...[Unable to complete it.]
3. Teacher: No, he doesn't have a daughter. He has 3 sons.
[The other children can't remember the story. They list the ones they do know.]
4. Teacher: We'll start with "Puss in Boots". We're going to have a good look at how he does the framing. While I read I want you to look very carefully because its like playing "I spy".
[The story is read, comments are made during the reading. Helen says they are cartoon pictures.]
5. Teacher: What words would you use to describe Puss?
6. Children: Sly, sneaky, crafty, dishonest.
7. Teacher: What about Jack? Is he dishonest?
8. Gina: He is a good man.
9. Annie: No he's not. He did take the credit for it.
10. Teacher: Why doesn't Jack understand these things?
11. Prue: He doesn't know what the cat's done. He's meant to be a prince.
12. Teacher: Why doesn't he catch on?
13. Prue: Because he's dumb. [Talk about other words for dumb. Dopey....simple]
14. Teacher: [Points to picture.] Have a look at the black line.
15. Prue: I think it's blurred.
16. Teacher: Some illustrators call it a key line and the white space around is called air space. [Children laugh.]
16. Helen: It looks as if it's been cut out because it's bumpy.
17. Prue: They haven't used a ruler.
18. Fiona: Freehand.
19. Teacher: If its freehand what effect do you think you get with that?
20. Fiona: Cartoon. [Inaudible talk about cartoons.]
21. Teacher: [Points to page 1.] We're got text in the bottom half, a half plate. Sometimes when you're got a full picture you call it a full plate.
22. Mary: And around the edges look like air.

23. Annie: [Refers to Ross's Jack and the Beanstalk] In that book they're got that line as well.
24. Teacher: I'll get you to compare his other books later to see if he does the same thing. Yes I think in Puss in Boots and Jack and the Beanstalk the illustrations are set out in a similar way. Have a look at how many illustrations are on this page.
25. Children: [Turn from page to page.] 4, 3,more.
26. Teacher: [Returns to page 2.] Have a look at the colours. [Children talk about the different characters]
27. Mary: The pictures are parted with a little white space.
28. Prue: I said that before.
29. Teacher: Each background is a different colour.
30. Helen: They're set out like comics.
31. Teacher: We could go a step further than comics its almost like being at the
32. Children: movies. [Teacher turns to page 7.]
33. Children: Darkwood Manor
34. Teacher: Look at this focus. Where do you think you are when you're looking at it?
35. Jessica: Behind the cat.
36. Teacher: Yes it's as if you're going to go on the Journey with the cat.
37. Prue: The pictures over there [page 6.] aren't set out all that evenly.
38. Teacher: Look at the bottom one where does it lead you?
39. Prue: To the catup to the castle.
40. Teacher: [Turns to page 2.] Let's play I spy. What can you see that's a bit strange?
41. Children: A wolf, needles, medicines.
42. Annie: x x skull
43. Teacher: What does that stand for?
44. Prue: Poison.
45. Teacher: He has just died!
46. Helen: One of the sons has tried to kill him or something.
47. Teacher: The sons or
48. Children: The cat.
49. Teacher: Who knows.
50. Teacher: Now if you look at the people Tony Ross has done there is something similar.
51. Annie: I know. Is it their noses?
52. Prue: The mouth. Look at the long legs.
53. Annie: Skinnylook at the arms.
54. Helen: Wobbly little things.
55. Teacher: That is Tony Ross's particular style.
56. Helen : Most of them have hats on.
[Talk about the hat shapes.]
57. Helen: Hang on he's using stripes.
[Session finishes with children finding the stripes]

Group 2.

Puss in Boots *Tony Ross*

1. Teacher: Today girls and over the next week or so we are going to study the illustrations of Tony Ross. he is a brilliant illustrator in the way he illustrates his stories. He hasn't interweaved or intertwined the fairy tales. He tells each tale separately but he makes some changes and he interprets them differently by using his illustrations. Who could tell us the story?
2. Zoe: There are three sons and the father owns the mill and the father dies and he leaves one of the brothers the mill. I don't know what he left the second son, the third son the cat. [Doesn't finish.]
3. Teacher: Do you know what happened at the end of the story?
4. Kylie: Something about a giant?
5. Teacher: Let's read it and find out.
6. Jane: [Teacher shows cover] Big boots.
7. Teacher: No endpapers perhaps because some soft covers don't have them.
8. Here we have the title page, a circular picture here and one of the main characters.
9. Kim: The story of a Sneaky Cat.
10. Jane: Oh cool!
11. Teacher: Long, long ago
12. Kylie: For Mum and Dad
13. Teacher: Oh yes the dedication.
[Story is read with occasional pauses to comment on the story. children find it very amusing.]
14. Kim: He's winking.
15. Teacher: Why do you think he is winking?
16. Kim: Because he wants to keep it a secret.
17. What did Tony Ross call this cat? He used some describing words.
18. Jane: Sneaky cat.
19. Susan: Crafty.
20. Teacher: What do you think of Jack and what he did?
21. Jane: Cool.
22. Zoe: Jack's the boy.
23. Jane: A bit wimpy.
24. Teacher: What's the word used in the story for that?
25. Beth: Simple.
26. Teacher: What do you think of Puss?
27. Jane: Clever.
28. Kim: Very sneaky.
29. Teacher: Do you think it's a "good" kind of cleverness?
30. Children: Yes.[All appear to agree]
31. Teacher: In what ways do you think he his clever?
32. Kim: Yes in two ways. The castle has been put to good use. The ogre is dead and puss killed him so hat is good.
33. Teacher: Who wins out?
34. Kim: The Marquis of Carabas, Jack.

35. Teacher: So Jack becomes the hero. You think that is clever? What about the part you don't think is clever?
36. Jane: Puss doesn't get much.
37. Kylie: He bought him the boots and the bag, whatever he wanted.
38. Zoe: And the puss is the Chief Mouser.
39. Teacher: Now what do you think about Puss's actions, his cleverness? Let's look at the sneaky side of it.
40. Kim: He got the ogre to change into the mouse so he could eat him.
41. Zoe: Putting the lettuces out.
[Tape inaudible, Kylie mentions magic.]
43. Teacher: What about the trickery, how do you consider that.
44. Jane: Good. [Others appear to agree.]
45. Kim: Its kind of a bit funny how Jack didn't know anything about it. He didn't know he was the Marquis of Carabas.
46. Teacher: If Jack was a bit simple or a bit thick as you said[Kylie diverts the children's attention.]
47. Kylie: There, look at all the stripes in the picture.
48. Teacher: How wonderful Kylie. It took ages for the other group to notice those stripes. If you look in every one [other Ross books]
49. Kylie: On the cover, shirt. [Children find them.]
50. Children: Shorts, clothing, stockings
51. Teacher: The stripes are Tony Ross's signature.
52. Jane: Those hats are cool.
53. Teacher: You call these stove pipe hats and you'll find them in all his books, like the stripes.

APPENDIX 8

Children's Work The Wolf 1992

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APPENDIX 9

Photographs of classroom display and Wolf collages.



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